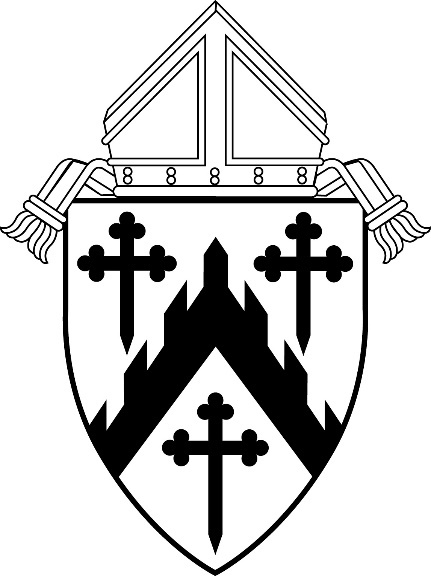
Diocese of Davenport

****

# Deacon Formation Program: Candidacy II Handbook

Class IX: 2025-2026

***These pages may be reproduced by parish and Diocesan staff for their use***

**CANDIDATE:**

Handbook approved at the Pastoral Center of the Diocese of Davenport–effective August 6, 2025

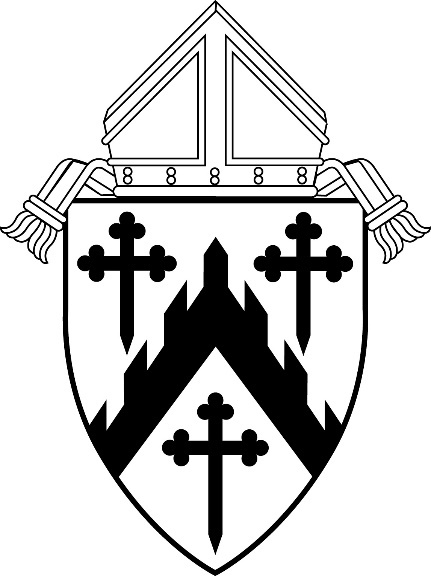
Feast of the Transfiguration

Most Reverend Dennis G. Walsh

Bishop

Diocese of Davenport

Diocese of Davenport

****

# Deacon Formation Program: Candidacy II Handbook

Class IX: 2025-2026

***These pages may be reproduced by Diocesan staff for their use***

Handbook approved at the Pastoral Center of the Diocese of Davenport–effective August 6, 2025

Feast of the Transfiguration

Most Reverend Dennis G. Walsh

Bishop

Diocese of Davenport

**Table of Contents**

**Introduction**

**Formation Team 1**

**Methodology / Program Components 3**

**The Dimensions of Formation 9**

**Considerations in Formation 9**

**Standards and Expectations 10**

**Application for Candidacy III 10**

**Recommendations and Decisions 10**

**Letter from the St. Ambrose Faculty 11**

**Components**

**Tab 1: Formation Sessions 13**

**Tab 2: Spiritual Direction 35**

**Tab 3: Mentoring 39**

**Tab 4: Pastoral Field Education 43**

**Tab 5: Parish Ministry 59**

**Tab 6: Testing / Further Reflection 61**

**Tab 7: Self-Evaluation and Growth Plan 63**

**Tab 8: Safe Environment 77**

**Tab 9: Candidacy III 79**

**Tab 10: Appendices 89**

**Deacon Formation Program: Candidacy Handbook**

**Introduction**

Welcome to Year 4 in the Diocese of Davenport’s Deacon Formation Program. According to the *National Directory for the Formation, Life, and Ministry of Permanent Deacons in the United States*, second edition, “The candidate stage of initial formation is the occasion to confirm a man’s diaconal vocation and prepare for ordination. Throughout this stage of formation, the candidate himself assumes the primary responsibility for his discernment and development” (§213).

The goal of Candidacy is to further prepare the candidate—intellectually, spiritually, and pastorally—for the ministry of Deacon. In addition, Candidacy is also a period of ongoing discernment and evaluation. As the Directory states, “Readiness for ordination is assessed annually by both the candidate and formation personnel to ascertain what level of achievement the candidate has reached in his understanding of the diaconal vocation, its rights and its obligations, his growth in the spiritual life, his competency in required diaconal knowledge and skills, his practical experience in pastoral ministry, and his witness of human and affective maturity. If he is married, a discernment of his wife’s readiness is also to be made” (§214).

During this year, a great deal of time and energy will be spent on the academic study of theology. However, such study is not an end in itself but is considered to be an integral part of formation for ministry. Therefore, you will continue to explore diaconal spirituality, be challenged to grow in self-awareness, and take part in supervised pastoral experiences as part of Candidacy. Discernment and the testing of your call to the diaconate are intended to be ongoing. Discernment takes place in community: your family, your parish, the diocese and the wider Church are all part of the process. In addition, the community that we form together—with its own cycle of gathering and prayer—is an essential component of your listening to the voice of God. We are all here to support and assist one another in our journey; this is not a competition. Certain attitudes and approaches that may have served you well in academics or business have no place here.

Please know that as you begin this second year of Candidacy that our prayers are with you. We look forward to this journey together as we listen to the voice of God, the promptings of the Spirit, in community.

**The Formation Team**

The Diocesan Bishop

As Chief Shepherd of this local Church, the bishop oversees all our ministries and programs. He will make the final decisions regarding the admission of an aspirant to candidacy, continuation in candidacy, installation into the ministries of lector and acolyte, and ordination. As the *Directory* states:

In the formation of deacons, “the first *sign and instrument* of the Spirit of Christ is the proper Bishop…. He is the one ultimately responsible for the discernment and formation” of aspirants and candidates, as well as the pastoral care of deacons. He discharges this responsibility personally, as well as through “suitable associates” who assist him… (§279).

Of course, the bishop cannot be everywhere at the same time, so he has appointed the following to help him in the ministry of forming men for the ministry of Deacon:

Director of Formation

“The director of formation oversees the implementation of the formation program. He conducts regularly scheduled assessments; makes home and parish visitations; supervises the formation team, faculty, and mentors; and maintains contact with the aspirants’ and candidates’ pastors” (§284). The director for our diocese is Deacon Frank Agnoli, who is also the diocesan Director of Liturgy.

Deacon Frank received the Master of Divinity and the Master of Arts in Theology degrees from the St. John’s University School of Theology and Seminary, and the Doctor of Ministry in Preaching Degree from the Aquinas Institute of Theology. He was ordained for the Diocese of Lexington, KY, and served there as a team member in both the Lay Ministry and Deacon Formation Programs. He may be reached at [agnoli@davenportdiocese.org](mailto:agnoli@davenportdiocese.org).

Marianne Agnoli is instrumental behind the scenes on our formation weekends, and helps to coordinate formation programming for the wives of the men in formation. She also serves as the Diocesan Coordinator for marriage and family life. She has the MPTh from St. Ambrose and is a certified NFP Instructor. She may be reached at [agnolim@davenportdiocese.org](mailto:agnolim@davenportdiocese.org).

Coordinator of Pastoral Field Education

Deacon Steve Barton has the task of coordinating the pastoral field placement portion of deacon formation. He works with deacons in the six deaneries to help arrange appropriate ministry opportunities for the candidates and assists the field supervisors in their work of helping to form and evaluate aspirants and candidates (§288). Deacon Barton was ordained for this diocese in 2017 (Class VII), completing the MPTh from St. Ambrose. He serves at St. John Vianney parish in Bettendorf, and may be reached at [bartons@diodav.org](mailto:bartons@diodav.org).

Coordinator for Mentors

Ordained in 2002 (Class V), Deacon Jeff Schuetzle has been active in parish ministry and with the L’Arche Community in Clinton County. Therefore, he brings a wealth of wisdom and experience to the team. Given his knowledge of the diaconate in the diocese, he is charged with coordinating the mentor program. He may be reached at [schuetzle@davenportdiocese.org](mailto:schuetzle@davenportdiocese.org).

Director of Spiritual Formation

The director of spiritual formation is responsible for coordinating the spiritual formation program, arranging for spiritual directors for the candidates, and serving as chaplain to the formation community (§286). With our past spiritual director having been named the next bishop of Baker, Oregon, a new spiritual director will be named.

Others

In addition to all those listed above, a number of other persons are also integral to the formation process: the faculty that will teach the Candidacy sessions, the mentors and spiritual directors, your pastors and pastoral field placement supervisors.

**Methodology / Program Components**

Monthly Sessions

During our monthly sessions, activities will focus on specific topics that are drawn from the prescribed model standards in the USCCB Directory for the Aspirancy and Candidacy paths. Various instructional methods and models may be used. The teaching points of the session may be accomplished through experiential activities, presentations, group activities, and practical exercises. Time for prayer, reflection, group bonding, and relaxation (breaks & meals) will be provided. These weekend sessions will include 12 hours of academic study of theology and another two hours of spiritual and pastoral formation. Formation Sessions will take place at the chancery of the Diocese of Davenport (St. Vincent Center): 780 W. Central Park Avenue, Davenport, IA 52804.

Schedule for the Year

We will meet once per month, August through May. The sessions will begin at 7:30 a.m. on Saturday and conclude at 3:30 p.m. on Sunday. A day of reflection is scheduled in June and the Rite of Institution as Acolytes will be celebrated in July. Here is the calendar for 2025-26 (\* = attendance by spouses required):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Topic** |
| August 9-10, 2025  *Fill out 9A* | Old Testament II: The Writings  *Formation: Racism* |
| September 13-14 | Johannine Literature  *Formation: Pastoral Spanish* |
| October 11-12\* | Pastoral Care, Part 2  *Formation: Eastern Catholicism* |
| October 18-19 | Deacon Fall Convocation |
| November 8-9 | Moral Theology I: Introduction  *Formation: Mental Health 1: Acute Crises* |
| November 16 & December 6 | Liturgy Practicum III |
| December 13-14  *Begin scheduling interviews with Director.* | Moral Theology I: Social Ethics  *Formation: Mental Health 2: Long-term Accompaniment* |
| January 10-11, 2026 | Homiletics  *Formation: Part of Homiletics* |
| February 14-15 | Ecclesiology & Vatican II  *Formation: Case Studies* |
| March 14-15  *Sign up for AC interviews. Turn binders in to be copied.* | Ecclesiology & Vatican II  *Formation: Chant II* |
| April 18-19 **(note change)** | New Testament Letters  *Formation: Prison/Jail Ministry* |
| April 24-26 | St. Ambrose Conference |
| TBD | Deacon Spring Retreat |
| *May 2, 9, 23* | *Director Interviews* |
| May 16-17\* | New Testament Letters  *Formation: Theological Reflection (separate session for wives)* |
| *May 31\** | *Admission Committee Interviews* |
| June 13 | Retreat Day |
| July 11 or 12 | Acolytate |
| July 12-18 | Homiletic Intensive |

Daily Schedule The schedule may be slightly modified on certain weekends.

Saturday Sunday

7:30 Arrival 7:30 Arrival

7:45-8:00 Introduction / Announcements 7:45-8:00 Introduction / Announcements

8:00-9:00 Morning Prayer 8:00-9:00 Morning Prayer

9:00-12:00 Instruction (3) 9:00-12:00 Instruction (3)

12:00-1:00 Lunch 12:00-1:00 Lunch

1:00-3:00 Instruction (2) 1:00-3:00 Instruction (2)

3:00-5:00 Formation (2)[[1]](#footnote-1) 3:00-3:30 Admin.

5:00-6:00 Mass

6:00-6:45 Dinner

6:45-7:30 Evening Prayer

7:30-9:30 Instruction (2)

Participation of Wives in Candidacy Sessions

The wives of Candidates are encouraged to take part in all of our formation sessions, not only for the sake of their own individual formation as adult Christians, but also to help foster the growth of the couple and their relationship during this time of discernment and preparation.

Of course, we understand that not everyone will be able to make it to every session. However, because of the nature of formation for ordained ministry, and because of the consent that we will ask the wives to give, we are requiring that the wives attend two sessions during the year as well as the year-end retreat. The sessions are marked with an asterisk (\*) in the table above. Difficulties with fulfilling this requirement should be brought to the attention of the Director as soon as possible.

Weekend Sessions: Overnight Accommodations; Child Care

Those who live outside of the Davenport area may choose to arrange for overnight accommodations. Candidates from the local area are asked to offer this hospitality to their classmates. Deacons in the area will also be asked to open their homes to candidates and their families. If you will need assistance in this matter, please let the Director of Formation know as soon as possible so arrangements can be made. In addition, if you are from the local area and wish to open your home to one (or more) of your classmates, please let the Director know as soon as possible. Possibilities for child care will be discussed at the August session.

List of Texts

In addition to a Bible and the Catechism, some general texts will be used throughout the year (and all of formation); there are also texts that will be assigned for specific classes. It is the responsibility of each candidate to purchase his own materials—either directly from the publisher, from an on-line supplier, or a local book or religious supply store. Part of preparing for ministry is learning how to access resources for your continuing formation and service.

**BOOKLIST 2025-2026**

A Bible with the “Apocrypha” or “Deuterocoanonical” books. Any reputable translation such as the nrsv, njps, nabre or niv is acceptable. You are also welcome (but not required) to use a critical study Bible, such as the New Oxford Annotated Bible, the Harper Collins Study Bible, the New Interpreters’ Study Bible, or the Catholic Study Bible.

**For Old Testament II: Writings**

Harris, Stephen and Robert Platzner. *The Old Testament: An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008. ISBN-13: 978-0072990515

**For Johannine Literature**

Brown, Raymond. *Introduction to the New Testament.* Anchor Bible Library. New York: Doubleday, 1997. ISBN-13: 978-0300140163

**For Pastoral Care, Part 2 (same as Part 1)**

Gerkin, Charles V. *An Introduction to Pastoral Care*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1992. ISBN 0687016746

Switzer, David. *Pastoral Care Emergencies.* Creative Pastoral Care and Counseling Series. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000. ISBN# 978-0800632281

**For Moral Theology I**

Rowlands, Anna. *Towards A Politics of Communion: Catholic Social Teaching in Dark Times*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2001. ISBN: 9780567242730

**For Homiletics**

Connors, Michael E., ed. *Effective Preaching: Bringing People into an Encounter with God.* Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2018. ISBN: 978-1-61671-486-4

DeBona OSB, Guerric. *Preaching Effectively, Revitalizing Your Church: The Seven-Step Ladder toward Successful Homilies*. New York: Paulist Press, 2009. ISBN-13: 978-0809146024

*For the Summer Intensive*

Connors, Michael E., ed. *Preaching as Spiritual Leadership: Guiding the Faithful as Mystic and Mystagogue.* Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2021. ISBN: 978-1-61671-635-6

DeBona, Guerric, David Scotchie, and Francis L. Agnoli. *Rites of Passage: Preaching Baptisms, Weddings, and Funerals*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2018. ISBN: 978-0-8146-4519-2

Garrido, Ann M. *Let’s Talk About Truth: A Guide for Preachers, Teachers, and Other Catholic Leaders in a World of Doubt and Discord.* Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2020. ISBN: 978-1-59471-961-5

Wallace, James A. *Preaching to the Hungers of the Heart: The Homily on the Feasts and within the Rites.* Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2002. ISBN-13: 978-0814612248

**For Ecclesiology and Vatican II**

Flannery, Austin, ed. *Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations. The Basic Sixteen Documents. A Completely Revised Translation in Inclusive Language*. Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company, 1996.

Note: this is the preferred edition, though any edition will do, including the online edition at:

<http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/index.htm>.

The class will also include a chapter from Thomas P. Rausch’s *Systematic Theology: A Roman Catholic Approach* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2016), which you already have.

**For New Testament Letters**

Brown, Raymond. *Introduction to the New Testament.* Anchor Bible Library. New York: Doubleday, 1997. ISBN-13: 978-0300140163

Retreat

The second year of Candidacy will close with a day of reflection in preparation for institution as Acolytes. The retreat day will be held on June 13 at Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat Center.

Second Languages

In order to best serve our increasingly diverse diocesan church, it is important for those who are preparing for diaconal ministry to develop basic skills in pastoral Spanish, including being able to preside at the sacraments and sacramentals in Spanish. Even if a candidate is already conversant in Spanish, the emphasis on the pastoral context in these courses will be beneficial.

We will offer an introduction to pastoral Spanish this year. Those enrolled in the deacon formation program are encouraged to keep developing their 2nd language skills through individualized tutoring, classes at a community college, or the use of computer resources (such as Rosetta Stone or Duolingo).

Candidates are required to complete at least one field placement in their second language while in formation. For example, candidates whose primary language is English will need to complete at least one field placement involving ministry in the Hispanic community.

Preaching at the Liturgy of the Hours

*Please see the more detailed instructions distributed earlier; they are summarized here.*

The Liturgy of the Hours is celebrated as usual, except:

1. We will use one of the readings from Sunday Mass rather than the short reading from the Hours. The Reader should announce and close the reading as at Mass (a reading from… / the word of the Lord).
   1. Saturday Morning Prayer = 1st Reading for Sunday
   2. Sunday Evening Prayer I = 2nd Reading for Sunday
   3. Sunday Morning Prayer = Gospel for Sunday
      1. The Gospel will be announced as a deacon would at Mass (spoken).
2. The Responsory after the Reading is omitted.
3. The dismissal (“Go in peace”) will be chanted.

You will be assigned a homily preparation group with classmates (3-4). A homily preparation group meets early in the process to discuss and inquire about the readings. The process for group *lectio divina* is followed. The preacher is not obliged to pursue the direction established in the discussion.

*Group Lectio Divina*

There are a number of ways to enter into this ancient way of praying with the Scriptures, both individually and as a group. I offer one approach here:

1. One person reads the text out loud for the first time [*lectio*].
   1. Listen for a word or phrase that touches or attracts you. [*meditatio*]
   2. Allow for 2-3 minutes of silence.
   3. Then invite the members of the group to simply share their word or phrase.
2. A second person reads the text out loud for the second time.
   1. As you listen again, reflect on these questions: [*meditatio*]
      1. What in this passage comforted you?
      2. What in this passage challenged you?
   2. Allow for 2-3 minutes of silence.
   3. Then invite the members of the group to share what they found comforting or challenging.
3. The text is read a final time by a third person.
   1. As you listen this final time, reflect on these questions:
      1. How does this passage connect with the experience of your daily life? [*contemplatio*]
      2. From what you’ve heard, what do you believe God wants you to do or be in response? To what is God calling you through this reading? [*actio*]
   2. Allow for 2-3 minutes of silence.
   3. Then invite the members of the group to share how the reading connected to their lives, and what difference it will make.
4. Close in prayer [*oratio*].
   1. Consider reading the text again.
   2. Consider allowing members to offer praise, petition, or thanks as fitting.
   3. Close with the Lord’s Prayer.

As you can see, our listening has also taken the form of what? / so, what? / now, what?

The homily should be around 5 minutes in length and use one of the forms you learned (What/So What/Now What or Wilson’s 4 Pages). Presume that the class is the audience (not your parish, etc.). When it is your turn to preach, please hand in the following (please number your pages) electronically:

1. A manuscript of the homily that includes:
   1. Your name
   2. The focus and function
   3. The text of the homily. The parts of the form labeled (What/So What/Now What or the 4 pages if you use Wilson’s method)
2. A brief report on your encountering the text via Lectio in your homily preparation group. What insight did you gain? See the questions above.
3. A brief report on your encountering the text via exegesis. What insight did you gain?
4. A bibliography of the sources used in your exegesis, etc.

Classmates will provide written and oral feedback after the preaching event.

Other Components

There are a number of other key components of Candidacy, each described more fully behind the appropriate tab:

1. Spiritual Direction – Tab 2
2. Mentoring – Tab 3
3. Pastoral Field Placement – Tab 4
4. Parish Liturgical Ministry – Tab 5

In addition, candidates and wives are strongly encouraged to attend and/or participate in all diocesan Liturgical events. Examples of these events include the Rite of Election, Chrism Mass, and ordinations.

**The Dimensions of Formation**

Formation is about preparing the whole person for diaconal ministry. Therefore, in attending to formation, we must focus on five particular dimensions, each with its own principal goal:

*Human Dimension*

To foster a high degree of self-knowledge and self-esteem while assessing the quality of the marriage relationship or commitment to celibacy.

*Spiritual Dimension*

To grow progressively in personal relationship with Christ while “putting on the mind of Christ.”

*Intellectual Dimension*

To communicate a deeper knowledge of the faith and Church tradition than the candidate has already attained while developing the ability to think critically.

*Pastoral Dimension*

To introduce the candidate to the practical ministerial life of the Church while providing mentors and pastoral placements that explore the core issues of charity and social justice in the Diocese of Davenport.

*Diaconal Dimension*

To discern the candidate’s gifts for the threefold ministry of the word, liturgy, and charity while the wife and family assess their readiness to give consent and support to the vocation and ministry.

**Considerations in Formation**

While we can provide the basic framework for formation, only you can fully engage the process. Our program presumes an adult model of learning: you are the one with primary responsibility for your formation. That being the case, particular consideration should be given to developing competencies in these areas:

*A Family Life Perspective*

A commitment to a family perspective is crucial for both married and unmarried candidates, for persons do not enter into formation alone. This perspective includes consideration of the family as the “domestic church,” and the important task of appropriately balancing ministerial responsibilities with family life. While the focus of the program is the formation of the candidate, it is also true that wife’s participation in formation offers her an opportunity to further discern her own call from God and grow in her own call to holiness.

Just as for a married candidate, the role of family is critical to the unmarried candidate (never married, widowed, divorced) and the same inclusiveness is encouraged. Additionally, the unmarried candidate must discern a clear and realistic understanding and internalization of the value of celibate chastity and its connection to diaconal ministry.

*Multicultural Diversity*

The cultures and traditions of those in diaconal formation are to be respected, valued, and understood. Formation methods and objectives are formulated to be sensitive and responsive to various cultural circumstances. Candidate formation experiences pay heed to both the multicultural makeup of the formation community itself and also emphasize the ethnic and racial diversity of our Diocesan population.

*Social Justice (The Practical Aspects of Charity)*

The deacon, “as a living icon of Christ the Servant within the church,” has a special attentiveness to the concept of a “preferential option for the poor.” The methods used in the candidate path help the participant grow in an awareness of the Church’s teaching and tradition of social justice. Also fostered are opportunities that include deepening reflection upon the candidate’s experience and his growing commitment to the Church’s social teaching.

*A Spirit of Ecumenism and Inter-religious Dialogue*

In acknowledgement of the Second Vatican Council teaching that full visible communion among all Christians is the will of Christ, candidate path methods strive to integrate an ecumenical spirit into all aspects of formation with the goal of creating “an authentically ecumenical disposition.”

**Standards and Expectations**

The content and processes associated with the candidate path are based on the *Directory*, which provides the minimum standards for successful completion of the candidate path. It is expected that you will fully participate in the communal sessions (including group discussions and completing all assigned reading and writing assignments on time), in the field placement assignments, in spiritual direction, and in meetings with your mentor. It is also expected that the work that you do will be your own. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty (including the use of LLMs (“AI”, such as ChatGPT, to write papers or homilies) will not be tolerated and are grounds for immediate dismissal from the program.

**Application for Candidacy III**

This binder is your application for the third year of Candidacy. Please keep it neat and orderly; do not change the locations of the materials or the numbering of the tabs. Only what is requested should be kept in this binder. Class notes, handouts, and related materials should be kept in s separate place. Please follow the directions included in this binder carefully, and see the Director if you have any questions. The Diocese reserves the right to make any necessary changes to this manual or to the application process at any point during the year.

**Recommendations and Decisions**

At the end of year, candidates and their wives will be interviewed by the Director of Formation and the Admission Committee. In addition, specific evaluations will be solicited from parish leadership, field experience supervisors, and the mentor couple.

Interviews with the Director of Formation will take place on the following Saturdays: May 2, May 9, and May 23, 2026. Each couple will schedule a one-hour appointment, with starting times of 8, 9, 10, and 11am.

Interviews with the Admission Committee will take place on Sunday, May 31, 2026. Couples will schedule 45- minute appointments, with starting times of 2:00, 2:45, 3:30, and 4:15.

The director, on behalf of the committee, prepares a declaration for the Bishop that “outlines the profile of the candidate’s personality and a judgment of suitability.” The Bishop selects those who will be called to the next year in candidacy.

**Letter from the Academic Faculty:**

To: Students seeking the MPTh in connection with the Deacon Formation Program

From:  St. Ambrose Theology faculty

Re: Studying theology in the context of vocation preparation

Welcome to the MPTh program!  Whether you are taking the courses for Graduate credit or for professional and vocational development, we hope that you will find the scholarly exploration of our faith tradition both enriching and challenging.  As we begin our journey together, we want to share with you certain truths that undergird our instruction and certain expectations to aid our efforts as colleagues in an academic enterprise.

First, Pastoral Theology teaches us how to apply theological insights in pastoral settings.  This includes challenging us both spiritually and intellectually.  This means that it both reinforces our faith while calling us to a critical understanding of the deep well of our Catholic Intellectual Tradition.  It calls us to identify, understand, and respond to the great truths of Christianity as derived from Scripture and the historical development of Doctrine, Ethics, Sacraments, and Spirituality.  The ultimate aim is for us all to learn how to be better pastoral servants of Christ.

*To get the most out of this opportunity we ask that you*

* come to each session fully prepared.  That involves taking notes on assigned reading and completing writing assignments between classes.  This often requires a substantial time commitment.  The purpose is to develop critical reading and thinking skills.
* recognize that there are important and often controversial challenges in regards to Church teachings.  It is the vocation of the theologian to investigate these questions, criticisms, and alternative perspectives with open minds.  The purpose is to better understand why the Church teaches what it does.
* communicate theological ideas with clarity, precision, and accuracy. The purpose is, in all pastoral ministries, to teach the essential truths of the Church.
* make both connections among and distinctions between key concepts.  The purpose is to understand the interconnections of all theological disciplines.
* ask questions, offer ideas freely, and respect the questions and comments presented by others.  The purpose is to be receptive to learning from one another.

*In return, you can expect that we will*

* Represent clearly and correctly the teaching of the Catholic Church and make clear distinctions between legitimate theological speculation and official teachings at various levels of authority among different kinds of magisterial documents.  The purpose is to understand what and, more importantly, why the Church teaches what it does and to participate in the on-going development of doctrine for particular pastoral applications.
* Both intellectually challenge and be challenged by you and support you in your academic efforts.  The purpose is to hone critical and generous intellectual engagement.
* Respect your comments and answer your questions to the best of our ability.  The purpose is to provide clarity while acknowledging that, in theology, very often there is no one single right way to think about a question.
* Provide timely and constructive feedback on your coursework.  The purpose is to help you gage your own academic progress and provide useful guidance.

The MPTh faculty of St. Ambrose University is made up of Ph.D.s with a wide variety of interests and specialties.  We are excited to provide perspectives from within the Catholic tradition as well as from other communities of Christian faith.  We base our curriculum on the guidelines laid out in the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons*.  It is possible that you will be joined in this academic venture by lay students of diverse backgrounds and religious denominations. They too will add richness to our journey.

Thank you for your interest in serving the church.  Regardless of the forms that your ministry will take, you are vital to the continued work of the Holy Spirit in our Church and in the world.  We all look forward to our work together.

Director of the MTh: Fr. Bud Grant

SAU Theologians: Mara Adams, Matthew Coomber, Ella Johnson, and Lisa Powell

**Tab 1: Formation Sessions**

Behind this tab you will find a listing of the formation sessions that we will be offering this year. Each session is described on its own page.

**Attendance Policy**

Candidates are expected to attend all scheduled formation sessions unless excused by the Director of Formation. Candidates are responsible for the material covered in that session and for the work due or assigned that day; specific arrangements are to be made with the Director.

Unexcused or excessive (two or more) absences may be a cause for dismissal from the program.

The wives of candidates are expected to attend the required formation sessions. If a spouse is unable to attend the required sessions, the matter is to be discussed with the Director of Formation. Failure to do so, or evidence that the lack of attendance is due to lack of support for the candidate’s formation, may constitute grounds for dismissal.

If in the case of inclement weather (or for some other reason) a formation session must be cancelled, candidates will be notified by phone if at all possible. Work will either need to be made up independently or an alternate session will be scheduled.

Even if the formation session is not cancelled due to inclement weather, candidates should use good judgment in deciding whether or not to drive to Davenport.

**1. Old Testament II: The Writings**

**Date:** August 9-10, 2025

**Faculty:** Rev. Dr. Matthew Coomber

**Description:** This course will explore the “Writings” of the Old Testament. Course will explore poetic texts, such as the Psalms, explore in depth the issues raised during the Second Temple period, especially the problem of evil as expressed in wisdom texts such as Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Sirach. It will also explore Jewish narratives, such as Daniel, Esther, Judith, Tobit, and Ruth.

**Needed Materials:** You should always have your Candidacy Binder, Liturgy of the Hours, Bible, and Catechism with you. Bring a separate binder for class notes and handouts. Make sure you have what you need to take notes. Bring any assigned texts and homework.

**Tasks to be accomplished before next session:**

Sign 9A (today).

Review liturgical assignments.

Make contact with your Mentor and Spiritual Director and schedule your first meeting of the year.

Begin planning your pastoral placement(s).

**Formation Session**

**Date:** August 9, 2025

**Topic:** Racism

**Presenter:** Dr. Lisa Powell

**This space is for taking down any notes that you might find helpful later in formulating your formation plan (Tab 7). You may want to note down what particularly struck you about this session or of what area of possible growth the presentation made you aware.**

.

**2. Johannine Literature**

**Date:** September 13-14, 2025

**Faculty:** Rev. Dr. Matthew Coomber

**Description:** This course will offer an exploration of the unique voice offered by John in the New Testament canon. It will examine the specific theological argument made by this author, and analyze the place of Johannine Christianity within the diversity of Christianities in the first and second century, especially as traced into the Johannine Epistles.

**Tasks to be accomplished before next session:**

**Formation Session**

**Date:** September 13, 2025

**Topic:** Pastoral Spanish

**Presenter:** Dr. Arturo Meijide

**This space is for taking down any notes that you might find helpful later in formulating your formation plan (Tab 7). You may want to note down what particularly struck you about this session or of what area of possible growth the presentation made you aware.**

**3. Pastoral Care, Part 2**

**Date:** October 11-12, 2025

**Faculty:** Dr. Mara Adams

**Description:** This course examines the theological foundations of pastoral theology, care and counseling. Pastoral care and counseling are viewed as theological tasks rooted in the Christian tradition and an important activity of the church and its ministries. The course uses the perspective of the human sciences to provide insight into the task of pastoral care. Issues regarding professional boundaries and knowing when to refer for specialized care will be covered. In order to allow for the development of skills over time and for the opportunity for fruitful reflection, the course will be offered in two parts.

**Tasks to be accomplished before next session:**

**Formation Session**

**Date:** October 11, 2025

**Topic:** Eastern Catholicism

**Presenter:** Mr. Adam Kemner

**This space is for taking down any notes that you might find helpful later in formulating your formation plan (Tab 7). You may want to note down what particularly struck you about this session or of what area of possible growth the presentation made you aware.**

**4. Moral Theology I (Introduction)**

**Date:** November 8-9, 2025

**Faculty:** Fr. Bud Grant, PhD

**Description:** This course introduces the basic principles of Catholic moral theology. It includes ethical theories as well as topics concerned with individual moral development such as the virtues, character, conscience, moral decision making, and the use of scripture in the Catholic moral tradition. Catholic teaching on social justice principles and documents will be discussed, examining some key national and global issues.

**Tasks to be accomplished before next session:**

**Formation Session**

**Date:** November 8, 2025

**Topic:** Mental Health I: Acute Crises

**Presenter:** Chris McCormick-Pries, ARNP

**This space is for taking down any notes that you might find helpful later in formulating your formation plan (Tab 7). You may want to note down what particularly struck you about this session or of what area of possible growth the presentation made you aware.**

**5. Moral Theology I (Social Ethics)**

**Date:** December 13-14, 2025

**Faculty:** Fr. Bud Grant, PhD

**Description:** This course introduces the basic principles of Catholic moral theology. It includes ethical theories as well as topics concerned with individual moral development such as the virtues, character, conscience, moral decision making, and the use of scripture in the Catholic moral tradition. Catholic teaching on social justice principles and documents will be discussed, examining some key national and global issues.

**Tasks to be accomplished before next session:**

Schedule interviews with Director.

**Formation Session**

**Date:** December 13, 2025

**Topic:** Mental Health II: Long-Term Accompaniment

**Presenter:** Chris McCormick-Pries, ARNP

**This space is for taking down any notes that you might find helpful later in formulating your formation plan (Tab 7). You may want to note down what particularly struck you about this session or of what area of possible growth the presentation made you aware.**

**6. Homiletics**

**Date:** January 10-11, 2026

**Faculty:** Deacons Frank Agnoli and David Shea

**Description:** This course covers theoretical aspects of liturgical preaching including the definition of the homily, the place of the homily in liturgical celebration, methods of preparation and sources for material. Candidates also participate in a week-long summer intensive in which they will develop, deliver, and critique homilies.

**Tasks to be accomplished before next session:**

Schedule interviews with Director (if not already done).

**Formation Session**

**Part of Homiletics**

**7. Ecclesiology & Vatican II**

**Date:** February 14-15, 2026

**Faculty:** Dr. Ella Johnson

**Description:** The purpose of this course is to familiarize the student with the basic teachings of the Second Vatican Council as contained in its documents. The course provides a basic introduction to the history and development of council teachings and the factors that helped to shape the work of Vatican II, with particular emphasis on a theology of church and ministry. The place of the deacon in the hierarchical structure of the church will be addressed.

**Tasks to be accomplished before next session:**

Schedule interviews with Director (if not already done).

Schedule interviews with Admission Committee.

Distribute evaluation forms to pastor, parish council president, mentor, spiritual director, etc.

**Formation Session**

**Date:** February 14, 2026

**Topic:** Case Studies

**Presenter:** Staff

**This space is for taking down any notes that you might find helpful later in formulating your formation plan (Tab 7). You may want to note down what particularly struck you about this session or of what area of possible growth the presentation made you aware.**

**8. Ecclesiology & Vatican II**

**Date:** March 14-15, 2026

**Faculty:** Dr. Ella Johnson, PhD

**Description:** The purpose of this course is to familiarize the student with the basic teachings of the Second Vatican Council as contained in its documents. The course provides a basic introduction to the history and development of council teachings and the factors that helped to shape the work of Vatican II, with particular emphasis on a theology of church and ministry. The place of the deacon in the hierarchical structure of the church will be addressed.

**Tasks to be accomplished before next session:**

Interviews with Director.

Schedule interviews with Admission Committee (if not already done).

Evaluation forms are due March 15 (except mentor and spiritual director forms, which are due by April 15).

**Formation Session**

**Date:** March 14, 2026

**Topic:** Chant II

**Presenter:** Dr. David Pitt

**This space is for taking down any notes that you might find helpful later in formulating your formation plan (Tab 7). You may want to note down what particularly struck you about this session or of what area of possible growth the presentation made you aware.**

**9. New Testament Letters / Paul**

**Date:** April 18-19, 2026

**Faculty:** Rev. Dr. Matthew Coomber

**Description:** This course is an introduction to the epistolary discourse in the New Testament, with (1) a focus on Paul, the communities to which he writes, and the theology and rhetoric of his letters; (2) the theology and context of the Deutero-Pauline letters and the Pastoral letters, and (3) and exploration of the “Catholic” Letters.

**Tasks to be accomplished before next session:**

Schedule interviews with Admission Committee (if not already done).

Begin interviews with ASC.

Evaluation forms are due; follow-up as necessary.

Prepare binder to be turned in next month.

**Formation Session**

**Date:** April 12, 2024

**Topic:** Jail/Prison Ministry

**Presenter:** Deacons Tom Hardie and Lowell Van Wyk

**This space is for taking down any notes that you might find helpful later in formulating your formation plan (Tab 7). You may want to note down what particularly struck you about this session or of what area of possible growth the presentation made you aware.**

**10. Pastoral Care, Part 1**

**Date:** May 16-17, 2026

**Faculty:** Rev. Dr. Matthew Coomber

**Description:** This course is an introduction to the epistolary discourse in the New Testament, with (1) a focus on Paul, the communities to which he writes, and the theology and rhetoric of his letters; (2) the theology and context of the Deutero-Pauline letters and the Pastoral letters, and (3) and exploration of the “Catholic” Letters.

**Tasks to be accomplished before next session:**

Complete interviews with Admission Committee (if not already done).

Hand in binder today.

**Formation Session**

**Date:** May 16, 2025

**Topic:** Theological Reflection

**Presenter:** Staff

**This space is for taking down any notes that you might find helpful later in formulating your formation plan (Tab 7). You may want to note down what particularly struck you about this session or of what area of possible growth the presentation made you aware.**

**Summer Schedule:**

6/13 Retreat Day

7/11 or 12 Acolytate

7/12-18 Preaching Intensive

8/8-9 Candidacy III begins

**Tab 2: Spiritual Direction**

Spiritual Direction is an integral component of formation for ministry, lay and ordained. It is also a crucial practice once someone is in ministry. As the *Directory* notes:

(§225)…. Throughout his formation, the candidate is “to secure the assistance of a . . . [spiritual director], to cultivate regular patterns of prayer and sacramental participation, and . . . to reflect spiritually on [his] ministry” [PDG (1984), no. 99]. As a complement to individual spiritual direction, it would also be useful for small groups of candidates to engage together in theological reflection “on the challenges and opportunities of their ministries” in relationship to the Gospel and magisterial teaching [PDG (1984), no. 99]. Further, throughout the formation process, it is expedient that the candidate’s spiritual director and those responsible for his formation ascertain the candidate’s understanding, willingness, and capacity to accept the Church’s discipline regarding perpetual celibacy not merely among those who are not married but, also, among married men who will be required to embrace this ecclesiastical discipline in widowhood or divorce (even with a subsequent declaration of nullity). Dispensations from the requirement of celibacy cannot be presumed.

(§226) The goals of the spiritual dimension during the candidate path in formation include the following:

a. To help each candidate to increase in holiness by deepening and cultivating his commitment to Christ and the Church

b. To strengthen his love for the study of the Word of God and his desire to pray with the Scripture throughout a lifetime of ministry

c. To assist the candidate in confirming his vocation to the diaconate

d. To help him deepen his prayer life—personal, familial, communal, and liturgical—and to instill in the candidate a commitment to pray daily for the Church, especially through the Liturgy of the Hours

e. To strengthen the personal charisms he has already demonstrated in his life

f. To help him integrate his new commitment to prepare for the diaconate with his previous commitments to his family and professional employment

g. To acquaint him with the relationship between spirituality and his commitment to the Church’s ministry of charity, which includes the promotion of justice

h. To acquaint him with Catholic classical and contemporary spiritual writings and the witness of the saints

i. To prepare him for the challenges of spiritual leadership that his ministry will entail

The Director of Formation and/or the Spiritual Director will communicate any concerns regarding the candidate to the spiritual director, so the matters may be discussed as part of ongoing discernment. However, the conversation between the spiritual director and the candidate is confidential. Nothing will be reported from the spiritual director back to the formation team.

Any problems that may develop in the course of direction should be taken to the program Spiritual Director (Fr. Hennen).

Candidates are asked to give the following form to their Spiritual Director for completion by April 15.

**Spiritual Direction Statement**

Name of Candidate:

Name of Director:

Dear Reverend Father:

Your assistance in helping to form men for diaconal ministry in our diocese is deeply appreciated. Without violating the confidentiality of spiritual direction, would you please complete this form and return it to the Director of Deacon Formation by April 15? Thank you very much.

*By my signature, I attest that over the past year I have met with the above-named candidate on a regular basis and with sufficient frequency to meet his needs and spiritual growth. The Deacon Formation Program presumes that “sufficient frequency” would be about once per month.*

Signature:

Date:

Please return to:

Director of Deacon Formation

Diocese of Davenport

780 W. Central Park Avenue

Davenport, IA 52804-1901

**Tab 3: Mentoring**

In the Diocese of Davenport, Mentoring is a process by which the deacon mentor and spouse, observe, reflect, suggest, encourage and challenge the candidate and his wife in their discernment. The mentor couple actively listens to the events in the candidate’s and wife’s life, challenges their theological assumptions, encourages their prayer life and family life, and encourages their growth as a minister of justice and love in their family, workplace, and parish community. The mentor couple also provides an opportunity to discuss freely and frankly difficulties in ministry and the ups and downs of formation. As the *Directory* notes:

The community of deacons can be a “precious support in the discernment of vocation, in human growth, in the initiation to the spiritual life, in theological study and pastoral experience.” Scheduled opportunities for conversation and shared ministerial experiences between a candidate and deacon, as well as meetings between the wife of a candidate and the wife of a deacon can mutually sustain their enthusiasm and realism about the deaconate. Some exemplary deacons in addition to priests should be appointed by the diocesan bishop to serve as mentors to individual candidates or a small group of candidates (§219).

The process and guidelines above are described for married candidates. The same process and guidelines apply for unmarried candidates.

MENTORING GUIDELINES

1. Mentors will be paired with couples for Aspirancy, and remain paired during the entire formation process.
2. Mentors and candidate couples are to meet a minimum of three times a semester, though monthly meetings are encouraged.
3. Meetings are expected to be 1-2 hrs in length.
4. Sessions should be casual, but not just casual social conversation. There should be a focus on the candidate’s formation experience for discussion and reflection. The sessions are not to be for mutual commiseration.
5. The mentor couple is not to be a “counselor” or “spiritual director”. The role is that of a fellow traveler, and a provider of suggestions for making the formation journey a more meaningful experience.
6. Aspirants and Candidates are encouraged to “shadow” their mentor as he ministers in the parish, participates in the liturgical celebrations of the Church and as he prepares himself and others for these different liturgical celebrations.
7. Mentors will assist the Formation Team in assessing the readiness for continuing formation and ultimately ordination of the candidate by completing the Recommendation Form that follows. The form is due on April 15.

While the process and guidelines above are described for married candidates, it is important to note that the same process and guidelines apply for unmarried candidates as well.

**Mentor Recommendation Form**

*Instructions:*

*Please give this to your mentor and ask him to fill it out and return it to the Director of Formation by April 15.*

**Name of Candidate:**

**Name of Mentor:**

**Number of meetings over the past year:**

**Based on my knowledge of the candidate and his wife (if applicable) my recommendation regarding admission to the third year of Candidacy is as follows:**

**Recommend \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Recommend with Reservations \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Not Recommended**

**Reasons for the above choice:**

**Suggestions you might have for this candidate:**

**Signature Date**

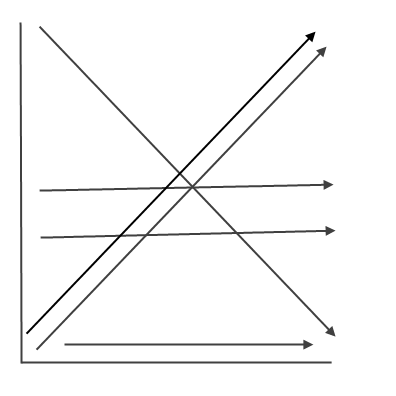
**Tab 4: Pastoral Field Education**

Field education provides deacon aspirants and candidates opportunities to experience and reflect on aspects of ministry within and outside of the parish setting under varying degrees of supervision in order to assist them in discerning their call to the diaconate and to develop skills in ministry.

At the beginning of the academic year each student confers with the director of field education and his local field supervisor in determining the experiences that would benefit him in his formation. In this process, the student prepares a learning agreement that guides the student through each assignment. During each field experience, the student will make regular entries into his journal to assist him in his theological reflection. At the conclusion of each assignment, the student will complete a self evaluation. He will also be evaluated by the local field supervisor. The evaluations will be forwarded to the director of field education and then to the director of formation for review.

Field Education Matrix

Students bring to formation a variety of ministry experiences. In the field education process, each student is encouraged to pursue assignments that will provide new experiences or experiences that will expand an area of ministry already explored. As he progresses through the process, he will experience assignments inside and outside of a parish with greater degrees of difficulty under progressively less direct supervision.

 direct supervision

parish diocesan

existing experience new experience

leadership self directed

difficulty

time 🡪

By the end of the formation program, he will have experienced a multicultural assignment, an ecumenical assignment, and will have started a new program of ministry that he will pass on to staff or volunteers whom he trains to continue. Students in aspirancy and candidacy are required to successfully complete two field assignments that total at least 50 hours each year. A mix of parish, community, and diocesan assignments should be experienced during formation.

In consultation with his deanery field supervisor and the director of field education, students may select field experiences from the list below or create other assignments. The availability of assignments varies between deaneries. Not all assignments will be available in all deaneries.

Field Experience Opportunities

A table of possible field experience opportunities follows at the end of this document. Please use this table to assist you with planning and keeping track of your field experiences. Check off the boxes that apply. It is intended that the table be cumulative; in other words, keep track of all your ministries (field placement, parish involvements, etc.) so you can see what areas need attention. The specific field education experiences should be marked with an asterisk.

Supervisors

The following team of individuals provides supervision of the field experiences:

Local Field Supervisor

The local field supervisor provides on-site supervision by guiding and assisting the student in the integration of experiences and formation to the needs of the particular ministry being explored. The supervisor assists the student in developing and following the learning agreement for the field experience which documents the student’s goals and objectives and outlines his ministerial assignments. An evaluation is completed by the supervisor according to the learning agreement at the completion of the field experience and sent to the director of field education.

Director of Field Education

The director of field education is a deacon or priest who administers and coordinates the program of field education for the aspirant and candidate paths of formation in consultation with the director of formation and others responsible for formation. He arranges for the pastoral field placement of each participant, orients and trains those who assist him in field placement, systematically introduces the aspirants and candidates into suitable pastoral experiences that provide practical skills for pastoral and diaconal ministry, and provides an assessment of the participant’s pastoral field education experience to the director of formation following an interview with the student at the conclusion of the assignment.

Steps in Completing a Field Education Experience

Step 1: Determining a Project

Complete the Field Education Opportunities Table. What are some areas that need attention? Consult the Director of Field Education to come up with some possible ideas. Meet with your potential local supervisor to discuss the possibility of doing your placement with them.

Step 2: Learning Agreement

Once you have an idea of what it is that you want to do, and you have a basic outline of possible duties from your potential local supervisor, go ahead and write up your Learning Agreement. The learning agreement is found behind the table of possible field experiences. The agreement needs to be signed by both the local supervisor and the Director of Field Education. See below for detailed instructions.

Step 3: Journaling

Each student must purchase a 7” x 5” journal book. Books are available at department and office supply stores. Completed journal pages are to be copied and added to the student handbook. Please place these copied pages at the end of this section, behind the evaluations.

You should log your hours and make brief notations of what you did on a particular day. Keep track of your emotional reactions to events, insights that you have gained, connections to what you are learning in the classroom or to what you have read elsewhere, and what you have learned.

You should choose two events for each placement for deeper reflection. These reflections need to be more substantial and must include the following:

1. Background: State the pertinent details leading up to the situation being described.
2. Description: Give a brief statement of the incident.
3. Theological Reflection: Describe how the theological issues raised by this incident are connected to Church teaching and tradition.
4. Integration: Summarize what has been learned from this experience.

These four reflections should be typed and placed at the end of this section rather than being handwritten in the journals themselves (for ease of reading).

Step 4: Evaluations

At the end of each field experience, the student will meet with his local supervisor and complete an evaluation form. The student completes his portion of the form on his own and gives the local supervisor his or her portion to complete as well. The two then meet to discuss the results of the evaluation. Both sign the form and the completed form is placed in the binder. Please copy the forms as needed.

Guidance Regarding Confidentiality and Privacy Issues

General Principles

The first principle is that the right of confidentiality in clerical privilege belongs to the client (person being served). This is the only protection in the law, and only the client may waive the privilege. The cleric can invoke the privilege if called upon to testify. Two important factors need also be considered:

1. The privilege applies only to conversations within the professional context of the cleric’s ministry.
2. If a person comes to you and has someone with them that they expect to participate in the conversation, that conversation is not protected. If the third person is an employee of the cleric necessary to the communication the conversation remains protected (e.g., a translator or someone present to protect yourself).

Specific Applications

*Prayers of Intercession and Related Matters*

While the HIPPA laws do not specifically apply to parishes and church ministers, it is important to be aware that any personal information published in parish bulletins (and websites) or announced from the pulpit (or sent by e-mail) can be misused. Therefore, in order to protect our people, we recommend the following:

1. Do not presume consent for publishing personal information. For example, if you are going to publish a directory make sure that you have permission to list any and all information. If you are in the practice of publishing ministry schedules, make sure people know that that is part of volunteering… This issue is especially important when it comes to children… Be especially careful with publishing addresses and phone numbers.

2. If you are going to publish a “prayer list,” do NOT list the reasons for the prayer request—even in a generic way. Even to say that someone is “sick” can lead to problems; better to simply state that they have requested prayer.

What if someone requests that specifics be mentioned? If they are speaking for themselves, and understand the risks, then please use your best judgment. I would think that the safest course would be to have a set practice to not include specifics; that way, there is no differentiation between persons or an impression given that someone is getting “special” treatment.

The parish has control over what goes in the bulletin and what is prayed at the prayer of the faithful; inclusion can be monitored both for appropriateness of content as well as for consent (see below). We lose that control and oversight if we have a “book of intentions” that anyone can write in… or if we open up the intentions for anyone to speak. For that reason, among others, we would recommend staying away from such practices.

Likewise, listing someone as hospitalized could lead to them becoming a target for burglary; thieves can easily find their address and then access the empty house.

3. Consent is an important issue. Who can request inclusion on a prayer list? Certainly the person him- or herself is able to do so. The consensus of those we consulted is that immediate family can give permission, especially if the ill person is a member of the parish. It becomes fuzzy if someone is requesting prayers for a non-parishioner. It would be prudent to ask any person making a request for inclusion: Does the person you are asking us to pray for know that you are making this request? Did you get permission?

4. Death terminates any privacy rights, so listing the deceased should be OK. However, do not list addresses – it is like giving an invitation to thieves who know when the house will be empty for a funeral. A caveat here: while privacy rights are terminated after death, to our knowledge privilege communications are not (we will research this matter further).

*Mandatory Reporting*

Child Abuse

Clergy are not mandated reporters of child abuse under Iowa Law. However, clergy are mandated reporters in our neighboring states (IL, MN, MO, WI), and case law is ever-developing. More importantly, our own diocesan policy creates an expectation that clergy will report child abuse; in other words, reporting child abuse is mandatory for clergy of our diocese according to our own policies.

Dependant Adult Abuse

Here, as in regards to child abuse, clergy are not mandated reporters. However, the IA Code says that any “outreach worker” *is* a mandated reporter. There is no specific case law yet testing if a cleric visiting someone in a nursing home or in their homes would be treated as such. More importantly, as with child abuse, there is a moral responsibility incumbent on the cleric in these situations, although there is no specific treatment of this issue in diocesan policy.

Domestic Violence

At this point, we are not aware of a mandatory reporting requirement in terms of domestic violence. This will be researched and you will be updated later.

*Someone who is a Danger to Self or Others.*

In cases where someone has expressed a desire or plan to harm themselves or others, the minister is not required to keep such information confidential. The minister ought to arrange for whatever is necessary to ensure the safety of the individual and any potential victims, including the summoning of law enforcement.

*Formation Programs*

The formation of ministers requires that those in formation have the opportunity to reflect on their ministerial experiences with their supervisors.

At the same time, as both supervisors and students, we have a responsibility to protect the privacy and confidentiality of those we minister to and with.

In reporting ministerial encounters, it is important to distinguish between intra-agency and inter-agency sharing of information. In the typical Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program, individuals see patients/clients and then report to supervisors within the same agency. Such intra-agency sharing of information (for example, in the form of a verbatim) is permissible. However, Inter-agency sharing of that same information is not.

On the one hand, it can be argued that students in formation are acting as part of the diocese (not as part of individual parishes or agencies). As such, any reporting back in the context of formation would be intra-agency communication and protected. On the other hand, given the current climate in which the Church operates, and the strenuous argument put forth by the Diocese in claiming that parishes are entities separate from the Diocese, there is a risk involved that the courts will consider such reporting to be inter-agency communication.

That risk is lessened if, in the case a verbatim is used, the student obtains the consent of the one receiving pastoral care. (Oral consent is sufficient; written would afford more protection but not absolutely so.) That risk is also lessened if a different form of reporting the event is used, such as a narrative. In all cases, any identifying information must be removed.

Therefore, the following will be required for reports of ministerial encounters:

1. All identifying information must be removed from the account.
   1. Clearly, those specific items that identify someone such as name and address and specific place of work cannot be included.
   2. Facts not relevant to the discussion but that might help identify the person should not be included. For example, that the person is one of 10 children may have nothing to do with the conversation or it may be a critical factor. The type of work that the person does may or may not be relevant. The specific diagnosis may or may not be important, while the fact that the diagnosis carries a terminal prognosis certainly is. Age and gender usually are and ought to be included.
   3. In other words, limiting the number of facts means that the confidence is more secure, of course common sense needs to be used since limiting all facts would mean no verbatim.
   4. Special care should be used in caring for the reports. Accidental disclosure could be caused by a lost notebook or a draft of a report being placed in the recycling bin instead shredding it.
   5. Please keep in mind that in a small community very few facts are needed to identify someone, and you don't always know what information your potential audience may already have.
2. If a verbatim format is used, the consent of the patient/client must be obtained. Oral consent suffices. A note at the bottom of the report that such consent was obtained must be included with the report. Alternatively, written consent can be obtained – using a form separate from the verbatim and then kept in the student’s permanent file at the diaconate office.
3. All verbatim reports are to be destroyed once they are returned by the professor.
4. Specific consent for using a narrative account is not required (for example, in the case of theological reflection).
5. These materials are not to be transmitted electronically.
6. Even though such experiences are often the most fruitful in terms of learning, if the encounter with the patient/client is in any way contentious (or if it deals with particularly sensitive or controversial matters – for example, a past abortion) it should not be used for a verbatim in this context.

*Sample Script:*

At the beginning of the visit, make sure that as you introduce yourself you inform the patient/client that you are in the deacon formation program. At the end of the pastoral visit, you can say to the patient/client something like this: “Thank you for the opportunity to visit with you. Since I am learning to be a deacon, it would be very helpful for me to share what we talked about with my teacher and fellow students. I would not identify you or anyone else that we have talked about in any way. Anything I write would be destroyed at the end of class, so no record would be kept. Would that be OK?” You could then add at the bottom of the paper: “The patient/client gave his/her verbal consent to sharing this material in the context of the Deacon Formation Program of the Diocese of Davenport.”

*Sample Written Consent*

I, , agree to allow the conversation that I have had with [NAME OF STUDENT] to be shared with others in the context of the Deacon Formation Program. I understand that any identifying information will be removed from the account and that, otherwise, this material will be kept confidential. I understand that the written report submitted by [STUDENT] will be destroyed at the conclusion of the class.

Signature:

*A Note on Electronic Communications*

One must treat any document transmitted electronically as potentially public. Therefore particular caution is called for when sending requests for prayer or class assignments that reflect ministerial encounters via the internet.

Deacon Formation

Field Education Opportunities (Cumulative)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Date | Existing or New Experience | New Program or Ministry | Parish / Community / Diocesan | Direct Supervision or Self Directed | Multicultural | Ecumenical | Leadership of Others | Difficulty range 1-3 | Burlington Deanery | Clinton Deanery | Davenport Deanery | Iowa City Deanery | Ottumwa Deanery |
| KEY | mm/dd/yy | E/N |  | P/C/D | D/S |  |  |  | 1-3 |  |  |  |  |  |
| Adult Formation |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Alcoholism Ministry |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Altar Server |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Altar Server (training) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Alzheimer’s Chaplain |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Annulment Process |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Baptismal Preparation |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Befrienders Program |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Bereavement Counseling |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Bible Study |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Bioethics Committee |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Boy Scout Chaplain |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Care Link Program |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Catholic Charities |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Centering Prayer Leader |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Christian Exp Weekend |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Date | Existing or New Experience | New Program or Ministry | Parish / Community / Diocesan | Direct Supervision or Self Directed | Multicultural | Ecumenical | Leadership of Others | Difficulty range 1-3 | Burlington Deanery | Clinton Deanery | Davenport Deanery | Iowa City Deanery | Ottumwa Deanery |
| Communion in Hospitals |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Communion to Shut Ins |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Confirmation Preparation |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Counseling |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Deanery Social Justice |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Diocesan Social Justice |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ecumenical Services |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Elder Care Chaplain |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| EMHC (at Mass) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ethics Committee |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Evangelization |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Finance Counseling |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Food Pantry |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Funeral Preparation |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Generations of Faith |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Grief support to families |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Habitat for Humanity |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Home Visits |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Date | Existing or New Experience | New Program or Ministry | Parish / Community / Diocesan | Direct Supervision or Self Directed | Multicultural | Ecumenical | Leadership of Others | Difficulty range 1-3 | Burlington Deanery | Clinton Deanery | Davenport Deanery | Iowa City Deanery | Ottumwa Deanery |
| Homiletics |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Hospice |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Hospital Ministry |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Jail Ministry |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| L'Arche |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Liturgy Planning |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Marriage Preparation |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Meals on Wheels |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Nursing Home Ministry |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Supervision of Volunteers |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Parish Administration |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Parish Building and Grounds |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Police Chaplain |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Prayer Groups |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| RCIA Preparation |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Religious Education |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Retirement Center |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Retreat Director |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Date | Existing or New Experience | New Program or Ministry | Parish / Community / Diocesan | Direct Supervision or Self Directed | Multicultural | Ecumenical | Leadership of Others | Difficulty range 1-3 | Burlington Deanery | Clinton Deanery | Davenport Deanery | Iowa City Deanery | Ottumwa Deanery |
| SHARE volunteer |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Stewardship |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Spiritual Direction |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Work Place Counseling |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Youth Ministry |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| OTHERS: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Deacon Formation Field Education

Supervised Field Experience Learning Agreement & Evaluations

Instructions

**Learning Agreement Guidance**

Hours – total # (briefly breakdown the hours in the Objective as indicated below)

Learning Objective

1. 1-2 *short* statements of **WHAT** you plan to do, generally describing the assignment
   1. name of ministry or program, particular activity
   2. categories covered
      1. Area of Ministry (Charity / Word / Sacrament)
      2. Scope/Location (Parish / Deanery / Diocese / Community)
      3. Level of Involvement (Observe / Participate / Lead / Initiate New)
   3. # of contacts, # hours each & time period

Suggested format of statements:

*“This experience in [name of ministry/program], will be ministry in [Area of Ministry], in the [Scope/Location], to [Level of Involvement] by [name the activity].*

*This will involve [# times, # hours each, time period].”*

1. 2-3 *concise* statements of how this experience will address aspects of your personal development plan (**WHY** you plan to do this – MOST IMPORTANT)
   1. expand a past area in a new way, or develop a new area of ministry
   2. why you are personally drawn or called to this ministry

Suggested format of statements:

*“I have a personal goal to [name it]. This experience is intended to develop my ministry of \_[name of area]\_ by [this specific field activity] to [behavior/skill to develop]. At the end of this assignment, I will be able to \_[specific way of using this behavior/skill].*

Note: please do not refer to “the poor”, “the hungry”, “the old” – they are all *people* – “people who are poor”, “people who are hungry”, “people who are seniors”, etc.

1. Keep all this brief, don’t explain HOW you’ll do this – you’ll get asked if more info is needed. Keep this to one page if at all possible. Don’t attach long detailed descriptions.
2. **PLEASE TYPE** all forms, not handwritten. If that’s not possible, please be sure to print legibly.

Putting all that together - EXAMPLE OF A COMPLETE LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

*I have a personal goal to better relate to people with needs different from mine. This experience in a Food Pantry, will be ministry in Charity, in the Community, to participate by checking people in. This will involve working once a week for 2 hours each time over 12 weeks. This experience is intended to develop my ministry of charity by interacting with people experiencing hunger to understand their needs better. At the end of this assignment, I will be able to identify appropriate ministerial outreach for people who lack adequate food, and to help others understand these needs better.*

**Field Ed. (Supervisor) evaluations**

* talk with your local supervisor periodically *during* the assignment about feedback
* after the assignment is completed, you meet with the local supervisor and the form is signed by both of you, send the evaluation to the Director of Field Education to review and sign for you to put in your binder.

Deacon Formation Field Education

Supervised Field Experience Learning Agreement

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Semester \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

At the beginning of the academic year each student confers with the director of field education and his local field supervisor in determining the experiences that would benefit him in his formation. In developing the learning agreement students should assess themselves in a number of ways. They should take an honest look at their previous experience, their current skills and abilities, and their need for further development. Objectives are predictive behavioral statements. The students’ objectives should detail what they want to be able to do when they finish their field education experience. Objectives indicate what skills and behaviors students need to learn in order to achieve their goals. The learning agreement is to be turned in to the director of field education by the end of the academic semester.

Total number of hours \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Log the hours spent during the assignment in the journal along with the location and activity

Ministry area (see Table):

Assignment description:

Agency or parish providing supervision:

Location:

Local supervisor:

E-mail: Phone:

Start date: End date:

Learning Objectives:

Acknowledgments:

Student: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signature: Date:

I have received a copy of the *Field Education Supervisor’s Handbook* and agree to abide by its provisions.

Local Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signature: Date:

Director of Field Education: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Deacon Formation Field Education Evaluation Form

Student Portion

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Semester

1. How was each learning objective met? If objectives were not met, please explain why.

1. How has your understanding of the Church developed during this assignment?

1. What have you learned about yourself? How could you minister more effectively? What do you need to do to further grow in ministerial skills?

1. Any other comments regarding the field experience:

Local Supervisor’s Portion

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Name of Supervisor:

1. Student’s level of accountability / reliability

1. Student’s ability to relate to others

1. Student’s ability to work collaboratively in ministry

1. Student’s openness to supervision

1. Student’s ability to understand pastoral issues and formulate pastoral responses

1. Student’s ability to relate theology to their ministerial experiences

1. Student’s areas of strength and weakness

1. Suggestions for continued growth

1. Any other comments regarding the field experience:

*The student and local supervisor met and reviewed the above comments on (date):*

Signatures:

Student signature:

Local supervisor:

Director of Field Education: Date:

**Tab 5: Parish Ministry**

Candidates and wives are expected to maintain and deepen their relationships with their parish pastors, staffs, deacons, and congregations. They are encouraged to be a growing presence in the parish and expand their lay ministry visibility in ways consistent with their family, job, and candidacy formation priorities.

During each year of formation, aspirants and candidates will be asked to focus on a particular liturgical ministry. This year, candidates are asked to serve as instituted lectors in their home communities. This ministry can be carried out in addition to whichever other ministries in which the candidate is already engaged (whether liturgical, catechetical, or in outreach).

Please note that as instituted lectors you are to vest in an alb when you exercise your ministry, be part of the procession, and be seated in the sanctuary. You ought not exercise any other ministry at that Mass.

If not already doing so, candidates should also be commissioned as Extraordinary Ministers if Holy Communion after proper preparation.

Pastors/PLCs and parish council presidents will be asked for an annual evaluation, due on March 15.

Assignment:

1. Please list the parish ministries in which you are involved on the Ministry Table of Tab 4 (pp.47-50).
2. *Briefly* reflect on your experiences as an instituted lector. What did you learn about the ministry and its place in parish life? What did you learn about yourself? What does this ministry have to do with the diaconate? Answer these questions in writing and place the paper behind this page.

Resources that you might find helpful for this ministry include:

*Guide for Lectors and Readers*, second edition, by Michael Cameron, Corinna Laughlin, Virginia Megher, and Paul Turner, LTP (2021), ISBN # 978-1-61671-578-6.

*Beyond Reading: Advanced Training for Proclaimers of the Word of God* by Douglas Leal, LTP (2022), ISBN #978-1-61671-632-5.

*Workbook for Lectors, Gospel Readers, and Proclaimers of the Word*®, LTP (annual resource)

En español:

*Manual para lectores*, Segunda edición, by Michael Cameron, Corinna Laughlin, Virginia Megher, and Paul Turner, LTP (2021), ISBN # 978-1-61671-595-3.

*Manual para proclamadores de la palabra*®, LTP (annual resource)

Place reflection paper here.

**Tab 6: Testing / Further Reflection**

**Myers-Briggs**

Continue to reflect on your MBTI results in light of your ministerial experiences.

**REFOCCUS**

Continue to work with the REFOCCUS instrument as a couple.

**Reflection on Work / Community (the “Marketplace”)**

Diaconal ministry and identity are not limited to explicit ministries within or outside of the parish. As you look on the past year, reflect on how you exercised your ministry in the marketplace – which includes work as well as other aspects of community life. How did you (or not) live out / witness to Catholic Social Teaching? How were you (or not) a herald of the gospel? What challenges did you face? Where did you find God at work? How did these experiences help in your formation for the diaconate?

Place reflections here.

**Tab 7: Self-Evaluation and Growth Plan**

Please *briefly* comment on (a) those areas in which you saw particular growth this year, and (b) those areas that need attention, including how you plan to address that need in the future.

**Human Dimension**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Comments** |
| To be self-reflective and assess abilities & limitations |  |
| To set healthy & responsible goals; be balanced |  |
| To infuse a family perspective into scheduling/programming |  |
| To be flexible and able to prioritize |  |
| To be dependable, trustworthy, consultative, collaborative |  |
| To communicate with and relate to a wide variety of people |  |
| To take part in diocesan programs and diaconal events |  |
| To maintain proper boundaries in pastoral relationships |  |
| To solicit input from those affected by activities/policies |  |
| To discern/evaluate ever-changing pastoral needs |  |
| To recruit/train/support parish volunteers |  |
| To find and use personal and professional support systems |  |
| To recognize and dispel prejudices and cliques in own life and  in the life of the community |  |
| To network with others in challenging injustices |  |
| To create structures that include all families in parish programs |  |
| To create a hospitable environment that values all persons |  |
| To conduct honest self-assessments and help others do the same |  |
| To function appropriately at different levels of the diocese |  |
| To plan retirement |  |
| To link parish structures & needs to larger Church structures  and resources |  |
| To demonstrate appropriate respect, responsibility and  accountability to bishop, pastor, or their delegates |  |
| To cooperate in the implementation of diocesan and  parish policies and programs |  |
| To maintain personal health and care |  |
| To spend time alone with family and friends |  |
| **Any additional comments:** | |

**Spiritual Dimension**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Comments** |
| To develop and commit to a plan for continuing personal and  professional diaconal education and formation |  |
| To participate in the Eucharist daily or frequently |  |
| To participate regularly in reconciliation |  |
| To participate in ongoing spiritual formation[[2]](#footnote-2) |  |
| To identify, affirm, and critique the various Christian spiritualities  operative in himself and others |  |
| To speak truthfully about the gift and demands of a celibate life.  If celibate: to form a support system & to accept the gift of celibacy  If married: to demonstrate marital chastity in conformity to Church  teaching on marriage and sexuality; to be willing to accept celibacy  if so called; |  |
| To articulate your personal expression of faith |  |
| To integrate the wide spectrum of moral and human issues into  your spiritual consciousness, prayer, and ministry[[3]](#footnote-3) |  |
| To communicate and share his ministry, prayer, and formation  with wife and family |  |
| To balance marriage and ministry commitments |  |
| To maintain a commitment to regularly scheduled spiritual direction and to opportunities, as appropriate, for physical and psychological health in consultation with a professional advisor |  |
| **Any additional comments:** | |

**Intellectual Dimension**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Comments** |
| To be able to articulate the primary teachings of the Church and discuss contemporary issues in light of these teachings; to apply these teachings to your own personal life and spirituality as well as to your ministry, in the following areas: | |
| Sacred Scripture |  |
| Theological Methodology |  |
| Theology of God / Trinity |  |
| Christian Anthropology / Theology of the Human Person |  |
| Christology |  |
| Ecclesiology / Theology of the Church |  |
| Liturgical Theology and Practice |  |
| Sacramental Theology |  |
| Theology of the Diaconate |  |
| Moral Theology |  |
| Canon Law (including Marriage Law) |  |
| Evangelization / Catechesis |  |
| Catholic Identity / Jewish Roots |  |
| Ecumenism & Interreligious Dialogue |  |
| **Any additional comments:** | |

**Pastoral Dimension**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Comments** |
| To engage in theological reflection |  |
| To use appropriate theological and pastoral resources  (including the Internet) |  |
| To use the tools and insights of the behavioral sciences  (psychology, sociology) effectively in the pastoral setting |  |
| To communicate effectively in spoken and written word (especially in multicultural settings and in conflicts) |  |
| To not act beyond your level of training in each pastoral care  situation; to know when, how, and to whom appropriate referrals  should be made |  |
| To access multicultural resources; be sensitive to other cultures |  |
| To apply appropriate human development principles in  preaching, programming, and counseling |  |
| To identify, articulate, and foster personal and communal  conversion and prayer experiences |  |
| To advocate for others and facilitate access to resources (especially for those with disabilities) |  |
| To be empathetic, genuine, and respectful; to maintain confidentiality and objectivity; to apply basic counseling skills |  |
| To integrate justice and peace into his diaconal life, family,  preaching, teaching, and staff organizational meetings |  |
| To model the interconnectedness of all people and to the earth; to model a simple lifestyle |  |
| To enable others to reflect upon and express their faith experiences;  To match gifts with ministry needs & utilize all types of media  resources to recruit and facilitate ministerial leaders |  |
| To help create a welcoming community (parish and neighborhood) |  |
| To recruit, train, support, supervise, and assess others |  |
| To apply appropriate managerial principles and administrative  skills to design, implement, and coordinate programs[[4]](#footnote-4) |  |
| To minister ethically and in keeping with canon and civil law[[5]](#footnote-5) |  |
| **Any additional comments:** | |

**Diaconal Dimension**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Comments** |
| To effectively proclaim the Gospel; |  |
| To instruct and catechize others about the diaconate and its mission as “the Church’s service sacramentalized”[[6]](#footnote-6) |  |
| To witness to Christ in living, giving, and empowering ways;  To articulate your call to diaconate as vocation; |  |
| To help others to grow in their knowledge of the faith and  personal holiness; to animate, facilitate, and motivate the whole Church ministry of charity and justice; |  |
| To witness to the Gospel in your place of employment; |  |
| To minister effectively in the following areas: | |
| Ministry of the Word  For example: To prepare a proper exegesis and contemporary application of the biblical text(s); apply the biblical text(s) with the Tradition and teaching of the Church to issues confronting the community today; To preach on matters of faith and morals, Christ’s initiation, and our response, expressing himself clearly and easily in a manner appropriate to the occasion; to be sensitive to the varied cultural, ethnic, racial, and gender dynamics of the text and the message; To utilize the skills for an effective homiletic or catechetical presentation through frequent social gospel preaching; to inform the community of their obligation to respond to the needs of the poor and to serve as Jesus did; to give personal witness; to speak the Gospel in his place of employment and in the marketplace with boldness, linking the sanctuary to the neighborhood, as well as the needs of the neighborhood to the sanctuary; to organize business leaders and neighbors around the Gospel, even on an ecumenical basis; To evangelize, drawing from the U.S. bishops’ statements (ex: *Go and Make Disciples*) as well as from the writings of recent Popes on evangelization |  |
| Ministry of Liturgy  For example: To lead and/or provide for Baptisms, communion services, burial services, weddings, nonsacramental reconciliation rites, devotions, and Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest as a liturgical presider; To exercise the ministry of deacon in Eucharistic celebrations; to identify the table of Eucharist with the table of the poor, bringing their needs to the common prayers of intercession; To exercise his role in conformity with the Church’s liturgical directives; To collaborate with the pastor, other priests and deacons, worship committees, and liturgical ministers in planning and implementing the liturgy; to provide effective baptismal and marriage preparations in accordance with canonical norms and directives of the diocesan Church; to guide liturgical planning; to coordinate liturgical ministers or enable others to exercise that role. |  |
| Ministry of Charity/Justice  For example: To serve in charitable care the needs of the poor, homeless, elderly, imprisoned, ill (including people with AIDS), and the marginalized of any kind; To create an environment of hospitality toward all people, especially the stranger and the marginalized; to join in coalition with other religious and secular groups for common political and community-based action; to integrate justice themes into his life and ministry; To provide educational programs that will assist the parish in understanding social justice as constitutive of the Gospel; to promote just parish structures; to situate study, reflection, and decision-making in the context of a responsibility to his world, especially to those in need; to participate in local debates and community action on behalf of those who are homeless, unemployed, suffering from AIDS, abused, etc.; To model and encourage simple living and environmental values; to preach justice by example and word; to demonstrate familiarity with the needs of the people in the community; to participate in charitable organizations; to be an advocate and servant of the poor; to promote justice and human development in local socio-economic situations; to minister to migrant and immigrant communities |  |
| **Any additional comments:** | |

**Instructions for Formation Plan**

First, write one paragraph summarizing how you met (or didn’t meet) your formation goals for the year you are completing. You will want to refer to the notes you took after each formation session, to your Intentional Growth Form (IGF), and to the essay you wrote as part of Tab 7 in last year’s handbook—as well as to any issues identified by the formation team or director for attention.

Next, address what your formation goals are for this next year (Candidacy 3). You should refer to the notes you took after each formation session, to your conversations with your mentor, to your new IGF, and to your answers and comments above—as well as to any feedback that you have received from your pastor, field placement supervisors, or others. Be specific and concrete; set measurable and attainable goals.

You may find it helpful to take notes as the year progresses rather than waiting to the last minute to put this all together.

**Tab 8: Safe Environment**

You are required to be up to date regarding your safe environment requirements.

**Tab 9: Candidacy III**

**Introduction**

As we did this year, during Candidacy III we will meet on one weekend per month. Each weekend will include 12 hours of academic study as well as 2 hours of additional formation. Shared prayer and meals will be part of the weekend. Spiritual direction, being mentored, pastoral field placement, and parish ministry will continue to be part of the program.

**Academics**

The academic portion of the program will be taught by the theology faculty from St. Ambrose University. For those who are eligible (have completed a four-year degree), the course work in the Deacon Formation Program will fulfill the requirements for the Masters in Pastoral Theology (MPTh) degree from SAU. Questions may be directed to Fr. Robert “Bud” Grant at 563-333-6419.

**Completing the Application**

Application to Candidacy III includes the following:

1. Completing the application request (following this page; section 9A)

2. Completion of the written work assigned in this Handbook

3. All documentation regarding spiritual direction (Tab 2), the mentor program (Tab 3), and field placement (Tab 4)—as well as all written assignments (Tabs 1, 5-8)—must be in their proper place in the binder.

4. Interview with the Director

5. Interview with the Admissions Committee

6. Recommendation from Pastor or PLC – the form follows (9B)

7. Recommendation from the Parish Council President – the form follows (9C)

8. Summary of Peer Evaluations (9D)

*Please give the recommendation forms (9B-9C) to the appropriate individuals and ask that they be returned directly to the Director of Deacon Formation by March 15.*

9. In addition, the candidate must submit a letter requesting Institution as a Acolyte. Place the letters in the front pocket of this binder when you hand it in.

The candidate handwrites his request to be admitted to the specific ministry. This request must be composed by the candidate personally, written out in his own hand; it “may not be copied formulary, or worse, a photocopied text” (CL, Enclosure II, 1)

Place the letters in the front pocket of this binder when you hand it in.

The summer between Candidacy II and Candidacy III will include a week-long homiletic intensive, which is required. The Intensive is scheduled for July 12-18, 2026.

**Institution into the Ministry of Acolyte**

If accepted, the candidate will be instituted into the ministry of Lector; the rite is tentatively scheduled for the weekend of July 11-12, 2026. The location and time are still to be determined. A reception will follow.

A certificate indicating the reception of the ministry, the date and place of celebration, and the name of the presiding prelate will be prepared and signed by the chancellor, sealed, placed in the candidate’s file, and recorded in the diocesan book on ministries and ordinations.

**Section 9A: Certification and**

**Authorization for Release of Confidential Information**

*Please read the following statements and sign the form below before returning this application to the Office of the Permanent Diaconate:*

I, the undersigned applicant for the Deacon Formation Program of the Diocese of Davenport, certify that the information provided in my application form and the accompanying application materials are true and complete to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief, and may be verified by the Diocese of Davenport.

I understand that my application materials include, but are not limited to, confidential information such as medical records (including HIV and Hepatitis B test results), mental health records (including psychological test results), educational records (including transcripts), criminal background information (including fingerprints), financial information, application form, and letters of reference, whether this information is provided by me or is received from another source.

I understand that information requested by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Davenport will be provided in confidence and will become the property of the Diocese of Davenport. This understanding applies to any information that I may supply or that third parties may supply to the Diocese of Davenport at my request and with my permission.

I understand that the decision for me to be accepted or not accepted for study in the formation program will be made at the discretion of the Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Davenport after consultation with the Director for Deacon Formation and others as the Bishop deems appropriate. Although the Diocese of Davenport may wish to report the reasoning behind any or all decisions regarding my acceptance or non-acceptance, there is no obligation on the part of the Diocese of Davenport to report to me the reasoning.

I understand that there are a limited number of positions available in the formation class, that I am expected to take part in all the required activities and complete the assigned work, and that my wife is required to attend specific sessions and encouraged to participate in the entire program,

I understand that I might not be selected for candidacy, for institution into the ministries of Acolyte and/or Lector, or for ordination to the Diaconate, and that the Bishop retains the right to remove me from formation at any time. Although the Diocese of Davenport may wish to report the reasoning behind any or all decisions regarding my continuation in or removal from the program, there is no obligation on the part of the Diocese of Davenport to report to me the reasoning. Likewise, I am free to withdraw at any time from the formation process.

I hereby authorize the Diocese of Davenport, its agents, employees, and anyone else acting on its behalf (including but not limited to the Bishop of Davenport, the Director of Deacon Formation, the Admission Committee, and their delegates) to have access to and use any and all of my application and application materials. I understand that the purpose of the application and application materials is to evaluate my fitness for the deacon formation program and the diaconate and to assist the Bishop in acting for the good of the Church. Application materials as the term is used in this Section 9A refers to the responses to any questions on this application, to any material I may supply in response to the application or which I may supply voluntarily as I make this application. It also applies to any material supplied by any third person (legal or individual) made at my request or made at the request of the Diocese of Davenport, or anyone acting on behalf of the Diocese of Davenport but with my permission. I understand that the term “application materials” will be construed liberally by the Diocese of Davenport and me to include rather than exclude materials should any question arise as to the definition of the term.

I hereby authorize the Diocese of Davenport to release copies of my application and application materials to any entity conducting a diaconal formation program designated by the Diocese of Davenport and to discuss my diaconal formation with the officials of such program. I also authorize the Diocese of Davenport to release my application and application materials to any diocese or religious congregation to which I may, in the future, apply for priesthood, the diaconate or consecrated religious life.

I further release and agree to hold harmless the Diocese of Davenport, its employees, volunteers, agents, and all those who receive my application or application materials hereunder from any and all liability which the Diocese of Davenport, its employees, volunteers, agents and any other person acting on behalf of the Diocese of Davenport may incur as a result of its or their use of such application and application materials.

I further testify that I make this application of my own free will.

Candidate’s Name (print) Signature

Date Date of Birth

I also agree to the [provisions of] (Section 9A) and that I consent to my husband’s application of my own free will. I further agree to and give my consent to the provisions of Section 13 of my husband’s original application to the extent that those provisions may apply to information in the application which applies to me personally or to any application materials, as defined in Section 9A, to the extent that such materials may apply to me personally.

Wife’s Name (print) Signature

Date Date of Birth

**9B: Pastor/PLC Recommendation Form**

*Instructions:*

*Please give this to your pastor (or PLC) and ask him (or her) to fill it out and return it to the Director of Formation by March 15.*

**Name of Candidate:**

**Name of Pastor/PLC:**

**During the past semester, how effectively did the candidate minister in the parish?**

**How well did he work with you and other members of the parish staff?**

**How were his interactions with parishioners?**

**What are areas of needed growth?**

**Suggestions you might have for this applicant:**

**Based on my knowledge of the candidate and his wife (if applicable) my recommendation regarding admission to the third year of Candidacy is as follows:**

**Recommend Recommend with Reservations Not Recommended**

**Reasons for the above choice:**

**Signature Date**

**9C: Parish Council President Recommendation Form**

*Instructions:*

*Please give this to your Parish Council President and ask him or her to fill it out and return it to the Director of Formation by March 15.*

**Name of Candidate:**

**Name of Pastor/PLC:**

**During the past year, how effectively did the candidate minister in the parish?**

**How well did he work with you and with members of the parish council?**

**How were his interactions with parishioners and staff?**

**What are areas of needed growth?**

**Suggestions you might have for this applicant:**

**Based on my knowledge of the candidate and his wife (if applicable) my recommendation regarding admission to the third year of Candidacy is as follows:**

**Recommend Recommend with Reservations Not Recommended**

**Reasons for the above choice:**

**Signature Date**

**9D: Peer Review Form – Instructions**

Please make enough copies of the Peer Review Form so you can complete one for each of your classmates.

We are not asking for an extensive evaluation; rather, give your impression of whether or not you think this individual would make a good deacon or not (#1) and then give a brief listing of what you think this person’s strengths (#2) are and where this person needs to grow (#3). These answers should be no more than 1-2 lines long.

The completed forms need to be returned to the Director by April 15.

The Director will collate the results and return them to each candidate. The original forms will not be seen by the candidates.

It is imperative that you are completely honest in your evaluations; constructive criticism is an important part of formation for any ministry.

**9D: Peer Review Form**

*Instructions:*

*Please complete one for each member of the class. The results will be kept anonymous and shared with the candidate only as a composite of all responses.*

**Name of Candidate being reviewed:**

**Name of Peer Reviewer:**

**1. Based on my knowledge of the candidate and his wife (if applicable) my evaluation regarding the above-named Candidate is:**

**I see clear evidence of a vocation to the diaconate.**

**It seems that there is some evidence of a vocation to the diaconate.**

**I see little or no evidence of a vocation to the diaconate.**

**2. Please explain, noting what evidence you see for a vocation to the diaconate (or not). What are strengths/gifts that this person would bring to the diaconate?**

**3. What suggestions would you have for his continued growth / improvement?**

**4. Would you trust him to minister to a loved one? Why or why not?**

**Signature Date**

**Tab 10: Appendices**

**Consent form for child care**

If you are planning on having your children accompany you to formation sessions, please complete the form that follows this page. Please provide a separate form for each child.

**Evaluation Form**

This formation program is a new venture for us, so please complete the evaluation form and help us learn and grow as well! You may find it helpful to fill out your reactions as we go along rather than waiting for the end.

**A note to those admitted conditionally to Candidacy II**

If you were admitted conditionally to Candidacy II, you were to have developed an initial learning contract to address the areas of concern identified by the Admission Committee. Please place a copy of that initial plan after this page.

Finally, please describe what you have done to meet the conditions of the plan and how you have grown or changed as a result. Please place this paper behind the original plan.

**DIOCESE OF DAVENPORT PARENTAL PERMISSION AND MEDICAL RELEASE FORM**

I, , give permission for my son/daughter, , to participate in CHILD CARE / YOUTH MINISTRY ACTIVITIES as sponsored by the Diocese of Davenport, to be held DURING DEACON FORMATION SESSIONS at St. VINCENT CENTER (or at whatever site the deacon formation program is meeting or children are being cared for) in DAVENPORT (or city of alternative site).

In the event of sickness or accident, the adults supervising the Child Care / Youth Ministry program have my permission to secure medical care for my child.

I understand that, depending on planned activities, my child may be transported by an adult from the program to another site. I understand that I will be informed of such plans and may choose not to allow my child(ren) to participate in such outings. In such a case, I will be responsible for providing care for my child during that time.

I hereby release the Diocese of Davenport and all adult sponsors from any and all claims arising out of or from any accident or other occurrence, causing injury to any person or property, during this event.

Signature of Parent: Date:

**Medical Information**

Name: Birthdate: Age:

Parent or Guardian:

Home Phone: Cell Phone:

Other emergency contacts:

1. Name: Phone:

Address:

2. Name: Phone:

Address:

Insurance Information

Insurance Company:

Address:

Policyholder: Policy No.

Please attach a copy of your insurance card if possible.

Health Information

Please circle any illnesses, allergies, or medication reactors you have experienced and give approximate dates.

Ear infections hay fever rheumatic fever

Chicken pox poison ivy diabetes

measles insects convulsions

German measles mumps asthma

penicillin other medications behavioral problems

any other:

Immunizations: (Please list dates as accurately as possible)

DTP: Series Booster: Tetanus Booster:

Polio OPV Booster: TB Test:

Operations or serious injuries: (dates)

Chronic or recurring illness:

Any activity restrictions or dietary considerations?

Any other health problems or comments regarding anything listed above.

If needed, my child may be given (circle each approved):

ASPIRIN TYLENOL (Acetaminophen) ADVIL (Ibuprofen)

Acknowledgement Statement

I submit that his health history is accurate and correct so far as I know, and the person described herein has permission to engage in all planned youth rally activities, except as noted by me or an examining physician.

In the event of an emergency, I hereby give permission to the physician selected by the youth director to secure proper and adequate treatment including hospitalization, injection, anesthesia, or surgery for myself, if of majority age, or the child listed, if a minor. I accept responsibility for all medical/surgical treatment charges, which may be incurred. This information may be shared with other adults from the parish for the benefit of my child

Signature of Parent or Guardian: Date:

**CANDIDACY EVALUATION FORM: 2025-2026 (Candidate)**

Excellent - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Poor Comments:

Formation Weekends

Location

Classrooms

Food

Child Care

Helpful - - - - - - - - - - - - - Not Helpful

Formation Sessions

Racism

Pastoral Spanish

Eastern Catholicism

Mental Heath I (acute)

Mental Health II (chronic)

February Session

Chant, Part 2

Jail/Prison Ministry

Theological Reflection

Ministry Experiences

Field Placement

Experiences

Supervisors

Parish Ministry

Helpful - - - - - - - - - - - - - Not Helpful

Academic Classes

Old Testament II

Johannine Literature

Pastoral Care (Part 2)

Moral Theology I

Homiletics

Ecclesiology & Vatican II

NT Letters / Paul

Prayer and Spirituality

Liturgy of the Hours

Spiritual Director

Mentor

Retreat Day

Strengths of the Program

Areas of Needed Change

**CANDIDACY EVALUATION FORM: 2025-2026 (Spouse)**

Excellent - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Poor Comments:

Formation Weekends

Location

Classrooms

Food

Child Care

Helpful - - - - - - - - - - - - - Not Helpful

Formation Sessions

Racism

Pastoral Spanish

Eastern Catholicism

Mental Heath I (acute)

Mental Health II (chronic)

February Session

Chant, Part 2

Jail/Prison Ministry

Formation for Wives

Ministry Experiences

Field Placement

Experiences

Supervisors

Parish Ministry

Helpful - - - - - - - - - - - - - Not Helpful

Academic Classes

Old Testament II

Johannine Literature

Pastoral Care (Part 2)

Moral Theology I

Homiletics

Ecclesiology & Vatican II

NT Letters / Paul

Prayer and Spirituality

Liturgy of the Hours

Spiritual Director

Mentor

Retreat Day

Strengths of the Program

Areas of Needed Change

1. A two-hour time slots will be dedicated to formation each weekend. It is proposed that this usually be the 3pm to 5pm slot – on order to give the faculty and the students a break. However, the availability of the one presenting the formation session may require a change in schedule on occasion. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. e.g., spiritual direction, retreats, community worship [especially the Liturgy of the Hours], personal prayer, meditation, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, personal penance and mortification, and devotion to Mary and the communion of saints [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Such as: human rights, sexuality, economics, peace, ecology, moral ethics, solidarity with human needs, the preferential option for the poor [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Including: to employ needs assessment and analysis; to formulate mission statements, goals/objectives, strategies, and evaluation methods; to prepare and monitor budgets; to organize tasks by priority and organize and manage his time in accord with ministry requirements; to delegate responsibilities, including authority to act; to recognize stress and select methods to respond; to develop and implement appropriate job descriptions; to set achievable performance goals; to supervise appraisals; to engage in advocacy, mediation, referrals, and facilitation; to demonstrate knowledge and skills in computer/internet applications, including online seminars; to use media and technology for effective ministerial implementation [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Including: To engage in employment agreements through familiarity with canonical and civil law pertaining to rights of individuals and employees relating to hiring, evaluation, dismissal, and abuse issues; to establish positive support systems and referral networking; to conduct information programs so that these basic rights and responsibilities are affirmed and cherished; to establish prudent and appropriate boundaries for interpersonal conduct, especially with women and youth [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. to be recognized at the altar as the sacrament of Jesus, the Deacon-Servant, in the midst of the community, and as herald of the word, sanctifier in liturgy, and advocate for the poor as minister of charity and justice [↑](#footnote-ref-6)