



OFFICE OF THE VICAR GENERAL
ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK

MEMORANDUM

To: Brother Priests
From: Joseph P. LaMorte
Date: July 18, 2022
Subject: Survey of the Permanent Diaconate

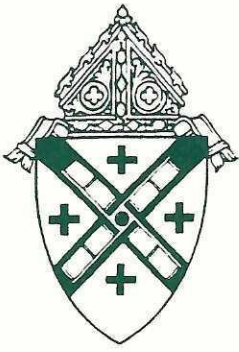
Grace to you and peace as we pray for a new birth of freedom in our beloved country.

Bishop Ed Whalen, in his role as vicar for clergy, is writing to all the priests and permanent deacons asking for a thorough review of the diaconate program of formation and ministry. Included are guidelines which will be helpful for feedback.

Naturally, your impressions and recommendations are an indispensable component of this evaluation.

As you give this request your serious attention during the next two months, we would be grateful to receive your letters by Thursday, September 15.

If you are anticipating a summer holiday with some deserved time for yourself to unwind, may you return rested, relaxed, refreshed, and renewed. Make it long enough that your parishioners will miss you, but not long enough for them to discover how well they can get along without you.



VICAR FOR CLERGY
ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK

15th July 2022

Dear Father,

From the first ordination in 1973, six hundred and forty-four men have been ordained to serve as permanent deacons in the Archdiocese of New York. As we move forward, it is time to evaluate the program with the hope that it may fulfill the reason for its restoration articulated by the Second Vatican Council: "Dedicated to duties of charity and of administration, let deacons be mindful of the admonition of Blessed Polycarp: "Be merciful, diligent, walking according to the truth of the Lord, who became the servant of all" (*Lumen gentium*, 29). The *Deacon Formation Program* will continue during this time of evaluation, but there will be no class beginning the program this year. Should there be any changes in the program, these will begin with the enrollment of a new class in 2023.

Your thoughts and suggestions are an essential element of this evaluation. I invite you to express your evaluation of our current experience of the permanent diaconate inclusive of the selection, formation, and ministry of the deacons.

Enclosed are questions which may serve as a guide for your feedback. Certainly, your response should not be limited to what is included in the guidelines. Please feel free to voice whatever thoughts, ideas, reactions, etc. you may have. The more input and ideas that we offer the better the result. Please send your responses either via email or regular mail by 15th September 2022.

Know of my continued gratitude and prayers,

Fraternally,

Most Reverend Edmund Whalen
Vicar for Clergy

Permanent Diaconate Review information and feedback

The numbers of permanent deacons in the Archdiocese are as follows:

- Active 228
- Extern deacons 7
- Retired 50
- Residing elsewhere 64
- Leave of absence 18
- Medical leave 9

The “externs” above are permanent deacons of other dioceses who live within the Archdiocese of New York and who function here with the permission of their Ordinary and faculties given by the Archdiocese. The “residing elsewhere” are men ordained for New York who have moved to other parts of the country, usually due changes in employment or retirement. They may or may not be functioning in their new area, and this should be done only with mutual permissions from the Archdiocese of New York and the local diocese. Each of the “leave of absence” and “medical leave” cases is unique. Increasing numbers of our permanent deacons are leaving the Northeast, a phenomenon noted in the population as a whole.

Some questions to consider:

- What is your experience of the permanent diaconate in your current and former assignments? If there are varying experiences, what factors are involved (individual personalities, type of parish, etc.)?
- What is your read of the formation of our permanent deacons: theological, human, liturgical, etc.? It would be helpful to provide concrete examples and offer suggestions for improvement.
- How many deacons are serving in your current parish? What are their ministries and what is the time commitment? Are our deacons more focused on liturgical ministry or “practical” concerns?
- How well are the deacons able to balance family life and parish commitments?
- What are your thoughts related to deacons being assigned to parishes other than the home parish? Should the assignment process for deacons mirror that of priests?
- Should there be a retirement age for deacons?

These questions are merely the start of the conversation. Rather than filling in a questionnaire, it is preferable that you reflect on your assessment of the current situation offer your evaluation and suggestions for improvement.