

## **An Invitation to Examine the Permanent Diaconate**

The role of the Deacon with the Church has a long history of service dating back to the early church and is enjoying resurgence in the modern post Vatican II era.

A Deacon is ordained to a mission of service within his parish and community and is a member of the Clergy under the direction of the Bishop of the Diocese. He assumes a servant's role; and extension of the Shepherding duties of the Bishop.

While all the faithful of the church are called to love and serve each other by virtue of their Baptism, some are ordained to specific forms of minister. Bishops, Priests and Deacons all serve the Church in their unique roles.

If you are a married or single man between 35-60 years who feels a call to be more active within your local parish, perhaps God is calling you to the Permanent Diaconate.

A Deacon is not a priest. At ordination, "he is permanently and publically configured to Christ the Servant, he shares the overall pastoral responsibility of the Bishop to care for all the people of the diocese, and becomes an integral part of the clerical structure of the church, in partnership with priests, serving the needs of the entire diocese." (Dietwig, William T., *101 Questions & Answers on Deacons*, p. 11.)

Through a four year formation program of education, spiritual formation, a series of group retreats and continued activity within his parish, the Candidate is guided toward the discernment of his call and a full preparation for his work as a Deacon.

Most Deacons are married, have children and jobs. His commitment to the program becomes a journey for his wife and children as well. The full support of the family is vital. Duties within the family are not to be replaced or neglected by the demands of study and function with the parish, though they will certainly have some impact.

Currently in the Diocese of St. Paul there are six ordained Permanent Deacons, four Candidates about to commence their second year of formation, and plans are underway to commence another four year formation program in the fall of 2016.

If you feel you would like to know more about the diaconate ministry and examine your place in the role of a Deacon in the Diocese of St. Paul, please get in touch with Bishop Paul Terrio at 780-645-3277 or email him at [bishopoffice@dioceseofstpaul.ca](mailto:bishopoffice@dioceseofstpaul.ca) .