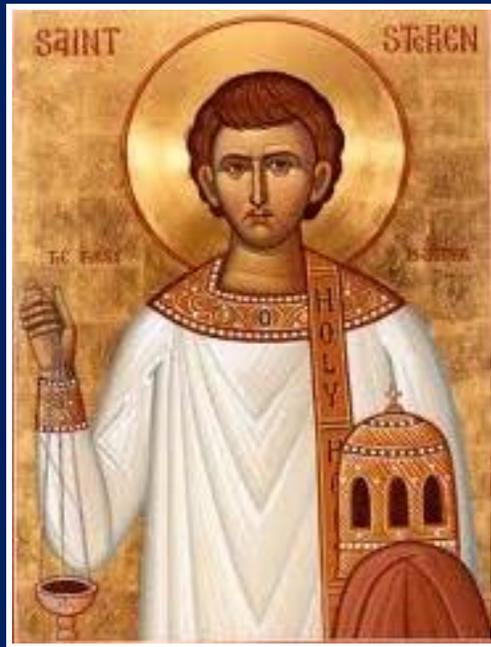


## A Call to Serve as a Deacon Ukrainian Catholic Metropolitan Archeparchy of Philadelphia

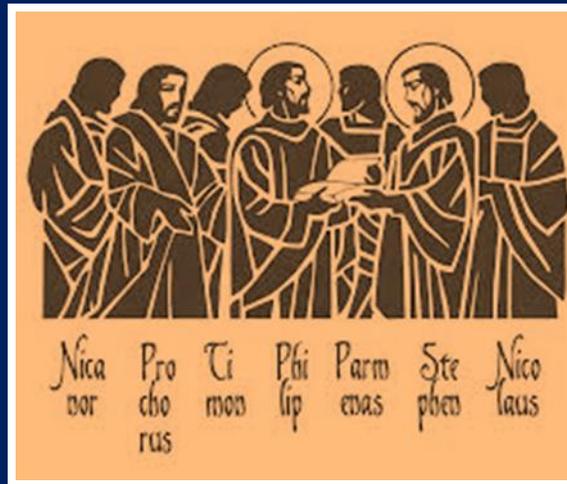


"O God our Savior, who have by your holy voice instituted the law of service for your Apostles; Who have chosen the protomartyr Stephen for your first deacon; Who yourself have first exercised the office of deacon as it is written in your Holy Gospel: *If any man wishes to be first among you, he shall be your servant . . .* (Excerpt of the prayer over the newly ordained deacon from the Euchologion)

**Office of Vocations – Diaconate Program**  
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## HISTORY OF THE DIACONATE

To understand who a deacon is and how this Holy Order originated, we begin with the New Testament scripture reading in the Acts of the Apostles 6:1-4: *"In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic (Greek speaking) Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, 'It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.'"*



The seven men who were selected would begin a ministry that would eventually become a very important part of the early church's hierarchy during the first 600 years of the church. However, the prominence of the diaconate would not last and would start to decline in importance through the following centuries as the presbyterate (priesthood) began to assume a stronger position in the church. The diaconate became a liturgical ministry, seen only as a

transitional training ground for those preparing for the priesthood. This role would not change until after Vatican II, when the ministerial role of the deacon would slowly be reintroduced, especially with the global demand for ministers capable of working for the Church in various capacities. The restoration of the diaconate was recommended by the Council Fathers of Vatican II in 1964 and in 1967 Paul VI did so (*Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem*). In 1968 the American bishops requested that celibate and married men be ordained to the permanent diaconate and in 1971 the first ordinations to the permanent diaconate for the Roman Catholic Church took place in the USA. It should be noted that in the Eastern Church there is no permanent diaconate. Rather, a deacon may be ordained to the priesthood or remain a deacon, depending upon his formation, qualifications and circumstances.

## ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Prospective candidates will need to meet the following requirements before entering the program:

***Bachelor degree or higher is recommended.***

***Candidate should complete requirements of ordination by age 60.***

***Candidate should be an active member of the Ukrainian Catholic Church for at least 5 years.***

***Ability to read Ukrainian is helpful.***

***Psychological testing and background check will be required.***

The main components of the program include theological, spiritual, liturgical, and pastoral formation along with supplemental programs in music, preaching, and rubrics



***The Vestments of the Deacon (left to right): Stole (Orarion), Cuffs, and Dalmatic.***

## **THE ROLE OF THE DEACON**

*The deacon's primary function is liturgical (liturgical diakonia or assistance).*

*The deacon throughout the services acts as master of ceremonies calling the congregation to order with phrases such as "Wisdom" or "Let us be attentive".*

*The deacon may preach the homily, although often the homily is usually delivered by the presiding bishop or priest.*

*The deacon assists in the consecration and distribution of the Holy Eucharist.*

*The deacon summons the congregation to communion – "Approach with the fear of God and with faith".*

*The deacon may direct catechetical, evangelization, pre-Cana marriage, and pro-life programs or other suitable ministries with the consent of his pastor.*

*The deacon may make visitations to the sick and shut-ins, and may also make regular nursing home and hospital visits.*

## **ENTERING THE PROGRAM**

If a man believes God is calling him to this vocation and meets the admission requirements, it is recommended that he initially speak to his pastor. Then he should contact the Chancery Diaconate office and request an application packet. It will include the application form and a questionnaire for his wife if married. A separate questionnaire will be sent from the Chancery to his pastor. An interview with the Archieparchial diaconal board will be required before admission into the program. Candidates may begin theological studies in the fall or spring semester at an approved Catholic University or Roman Catholic diaconal program. Details regarding a Theological, Spiritual, and Pastoral formation will be worked out after acceptance into the program. After ordination, deacons are assigned to parishes to assist the pastor in his ministry with the faithful. While deacons are usually assigned to parishes in the area near their residence, deacons are not necessarily assigned to their home parishes.

## **FINANCING THE PROGRAM**

Generally, the diaconal candidate is responsible for financing his program of studies. However, depending upon demonstrated need, financial assistance may be available from the Archeparchy to help diaconal candidates meet these expenses. The lack of financial resources should never deter anyone from pursuing a religious vocation to serve the Lord.

## **SUGGESTIONS TO HELP IN THE DISCERNMENT PROCESS:**

In becoming a deacon there are two stages that must be completed before ordination: (1) The aspirant stage – This is where the man is trying to discern if God is calling him to serve as a deacon? If he decides to apply, he should first meet with his pastor and then request, complete,

and submit the application documents. (2) The candidate stage – At this stage, a man who has been accepted into the program will continue his personal discernment of God's call and will begin his theological, spiritual, and pastoral formation. The formation program usually lasts four to five years before a candidate is ordained to the diaconate.



***Two deacons assist at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.***

Perhaps you are a man who would like to take a more active role in the Ukrainian Catholic Church and may have the calling to serve as a deacon. If you would like to discuss the program or would like more information contact the :

**Archieparchial Office of Vocations  
Diaconal Office  
Phone 215 - 627- 0143  
Email: [ukrvocations@catholic.org](mailto:ukrvocations@catholic.org)**