

Deacon is a role in the Christian Church which is generally associated with service of some kind, but which varies among theological and denominational traditions. In many traditions, the **diaconate** is a clerical office; in others, it is for laity. The word *deacon* is derived from the Greek word *diakonos* (διάκονος), which literally means 'through the dust' and is often translated *servant* or *waiter*. It is generally believed that the office of deacon originated in the selection of seven men, among them Stephen, to assist with the charitable work of the early church as recorded in Acts 6.

Among the more prominent deacons in history are Saint Stephen, the first Christian martyr; **Philip the Evangelist, whose baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch** is recounted in Acts 8:26-40 [and is depicted in the window in the Gathering Space at St Leo by the steps]; **Saint Lawrence, an early Roman martyr**.

The diaconate is one of the three ordained offices in the Roman Catholic church. The other two offices are those of priest and of bishop.

While the **permanent diaconate** was maintained from earliest Apostolic times to the present in the Eastern churches (Orthodox and Catholic), it gradually disappeared in the Western church (with a few notable exceptions) during the first millennium. The diaconate continued in a vestigial form as a temporary, final step along the course to ordination to the priesthood. In the 20th Century, the permanent diaconate was restored in many Western churches, most notably in Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion.

In Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglican churches, deacons assist priests in their pastoral and administrative duties, but report directly to the bishop. They have a distinctive role in the liturgy, their main tasks being to proclaim the Gospel, preach, and assist in the administration of the Eucharist.

In the years just prior to the Second Vatican Council, the only men ordained as deacons were seminarians, who received the order several months before priestly ordination. Following the recommendations of the council (in *Lumen Gentium* 29), in 1967 Pope Paul VI issued the motu proprio *Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem*, restoring the ancient practice of ordaining to the diaconate men who were not candidates for priestly ordination. These men are known as **permanent deacons**; those ordained to the diaconate who intend to proceed to, or are in the process of seminary studies leading to, priestly ordination are called **transitional deacons**. The permanent diaconate is particularly popular in the United States.

The ministry of the deacon in the Roman Catholic Church is described as one of service in three areas: **the Word, the Liturgy and Charity**. The deacon's ministry

of the Word includes proclaiming the Gospel at the Eucharist, preaching and teaching. His ministry at the Altar includes various parts of the Mass proper to the deacon, including being the proper minister of the cup. The ministry of charity involves service to the poor and marginalized and working with parishioners to help them become more involved in such ministry.

Deacons can **administer the sacrament of Baptism** and serve as the church's **witness at the sacrament of Holy Matrimony**, which the bride and groom administer to each other. Deacons may **preside at funerals**, the **Liturgy of the Hours**, various services such as **Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and they may give blessings**. They **cannot** *give absolution, anoint the sick, or say Mass*. In the liturgy, it is proper for the deacon to proclaim the Gospel and distribute Holy Communion. Transitional and permanent deacons both have the faculty to preach the homily by right of their ordination unless the priest presider retains that ministry to himself in any particular liturgy.

The vestment most particularly associated with the Roman Catholic deacon is the dalmatic. Deacons, like priests and bishops, wear the stole; however, deacons place the stole **over their left shoulder and it hangs across to their right side**, while priests and bishops wear it around the neck.

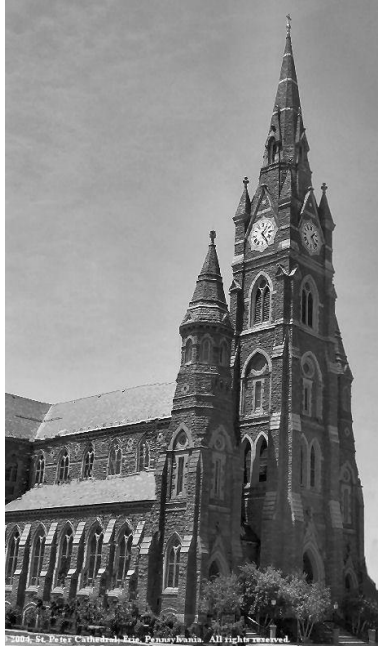
Permanent deacons often serve in parish or other ministry as their time permits, since they typically have other full time employment. They may also act as parish administrators. With the passage of time, more and more deacons are serving in full-time ministries in parishes, hospitals, prisons, and in diocesan positions. Deacons often work directly in ministry to the marginalized inside and outside the church: the poor, the sick, the hungry, the imprisoned.

Married individuals may be ordained as permanent deacons; however, marriage after ordination is not permitted unless approved by the local Bishop. Under some circumstances, however, permanent deacons who have been widowed can receive permission to remarry. The wife of a permanent deacon often is considered a partner in his ordained ministry, leading to the popular concept of "deacon couples." In many dioceses, the wife of the deacon candidate undertakes the same education and training her husband does.

A permanent deacon is not styled "Father" as a priest would be, but as "**Deacon**," abbreviated variously as "Dn." or "Dcn." This preferred method of address is stated in the 2005 document of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States." Although some dioceses use the title "**Rev. Mr.**" for all deacons, this title is more properly applied to those in the transitional diaconate.

The decision as to whether deacons wear the Roman collar as street attire is left to the discretion of each diocesan bishop for his own diocese.

Larry Caggese of St. Leo Parish
is to be ordained a DEACON at
Saint Peter Cathedral in Erie, PA,



by Bishop Donald W. Trautman
at 7:00pm on Friday May 16, 2008.

All members of the parish are invited to attend this wonderful ceremony. Seats will be limited as there are several candidates being ordained that night with Larry. All are encouraged to attend and participate in the wonderful Liturgy of Ordination.

Larry will celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving back at Saint Leos on
Saturday May 31, 2008 with a reception to follow.

Our parish is in the process of organizing a bus to travel to Erie on Friday May 16th. We would appreciate any input from those who wish to attend. Fr. Ted Marconi is willing to take a bus early in the day and tour the Cathedral and St. Mark Catholic Center, have dinner and attend the Ordination that evening. We could also just take the bus from Ridgway to the Cathedral and home that night.



Larry and his classmates at his installation as a “Lector” at Saint Mark Catholic Center

Please fill out this slip to let us know if you plan to attend;

Name_____

Phone number_____

Number of your party attending_____

1. Would you want to travel to Erie in the morning and **tour** the cathedral, stay for dinner and return? **YES/NO** (circle one)
2. Would you want to travel to Erie at about 2:30pm and return right after ordination? **YES/NO** (circle one)

The cost of the day will depend on the number of people who will ride the bus, and how many meals we have.



Larry with his two sons Nick and Mike