

Generous response to the Diocesan Ministries Appeal allows new programs of formation to begin



Thanks to the Diocesan Ministries Appeal, the dreams to establish two important formation programs in the Diocese of New Ulm will be realized. The two programs are for permanent deacons and lay ministers. Previous efforts to start up a permanent diaconate ended because of the financial burden or excessive travel distances to Catholic colleges or universities. These factors also limited similar efforts to provide access for lay ministers to college-level and masters degree study.

Permanent Deacons: This fall, a diocesan formation program for permanent deacons begins at Schoenstatt on the Lake in Sleepy Eye. Faculty from Saint Meinrad Seminary in St. Meinrad, IN, will

teach the sessions. Several formation programs for lay ministers will also begin in fall with faculty from Saint Mary's University in Winona. The permanent diaconate program consists of a one-year period of discernment, called aspirancy, followed by a four-year academic formation. During the formation period, the deacon candidate receives theological, spiritual, philosophical, pastoral and liturgical training to prepare him for ordained ministry. Because deacons are ordained members of the clergy, the selection of prospective candidates will receive serious attention over the next several months. Up to thirty (30) prospective candidates will be accepted into the first class after interviews, evaluations, and discernment.

Lay Ministers: All baptized Catholics are called to a life of holiness and dedication to the lay apostolate. This lay apostolate includes a mission to bring the Good News of Jesus to the home, the neighborhood, the community, and the workplace.

Thanks to the Diocesan Ministries Appeal, programs are now in place to help form and train adult Catholics to carry out this responsibility. College-level theology study and spiritual formation are available to any interested Catholic in the Diocese of New Ulm through the Foundations and Together in Communion programs. Both programs will use faculty from Saint Mary's University in Winona.



Permanent Deacons

process of preparing men for the priesthood. One measure of the importance of the deacon in the early church is the number of deacons elected pope in the early Middle Ages. Thirty-seven deacons were elected pope between the years of 432 and 684.

The role and ministry of the permanent deacon has been well defined since the earliest days of the Church. Acts 6:1-7 describes the choice of the first deacons who were called to serve the poor and neglected as well as to assist the apostles in carrying forth the mission of Christ in the Church. One of the seven first deacons, Stephen, was stoned to death because of his bold preaching of the Gospels, in Acts 6 and 7.

The office of deacon in the early Church was highly prestigious. The office and ministry of the permanent deacon flourished in the Church until the seventh century, when the role of the deacon was included, in a transitional way, in the

In modern times, the impetus for restoring the diaconate on a permanent basis was provided in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium). The Council Fathers urged that the role of the deacon should be restored to a permanent rank in the hierarchy.

The office and ministry of the permanent deacon is a distinctive vocation in the Church. From the earliest period of Church life, Church leaders recognized the unique call to service given to the deacon at ordination. Although the diaconate is an ordained ministry of the Church, it is a different ministry from that of bishops and priests. Deacons are ordained into a ministry of service and enjoy a special relationship with the bishop.

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Lay Ministers

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Both programs will use faculty from Saint Mary's University in Winona, MN.

FOUNDATIONS and Together in Communion can help them to minister with greater confidence and competence.

Some lay ministers are working full or part-time for parishes and Area Faith Communities as religious education directors, youth ministers, liturgists, parish workers and pastoral administrators.

Thanks to the Diocesan Ministries Appeal, lay ministers interested in graduate study will now have that possibility through the summer program at Saint Mary's University.

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The Ministry of the Deacon

WORD • LITURGY • CHARITY



DEACON MARK KOBER
of Sleepy Eye, MN, is
the first ever New Ulm Diocesan
Director of the Permanent Diaconate
Program. This has been made possible
by contributions to the
Diocesan Ministries Appeal!

Restored after 1300 years by the Second Vatican Council, the Diaconate is rooted in the New Testament Church. The apostles chose deacons to help them respond to the pressing needs of the infant Church and to maintain fidelity to its mission of service. Deacons are called to embody the ideal of every follower of Christ, to be "one who serves." (Luke 22:27)

In the Diocese of New Ulm, the ministry of the permanent deacon will often include:

M INISTRY OF WORD

- To preach the Gospel in the Sacred Liturgies of the Church and through the witness of his life.
- To participate in the educational and catechetical apostolates.
- To prepare parishioners for Baptism, Confirmation and Marriage preparation.
- To search out the fallen away and foster the evangelization of the unchurched.
- To promote ecumenism in the local communities, according to diocesan policies.

M INISTRY OF LITURGY

- To assist at the Eucharist, proclaim the Gospel, preach, and promote Eucharistic devotion.
- To baptize and witness marriages.
- To administer sacramentals, bring Viaticum to the dying, and bury the dead.
- To organize and assist with prayer services and programs for spiritual renewal.
- To promote vocations.

M INISTRY OF CHARITY

- To care for the poor, the sick, the handicapped, the unemployed, the elderly, the imprisoned, the homeless, the migrant, and the immigrant.
- To reach out to the disturbed, the alienated, the estranged, the forgotten.
- To assist with stewardship and charitable giving efforts.
- To advocate for social justice.
- To organize and lead the laity to exercise apostolates of charity.

Qualifications for admission to the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program

A. PERSONAL

1. A confirmed, practicing Roman Catholic, married or single and at least thirty-five (35) years of age at the time of ordination and not more than fifty-five (55) years of age at the time of admission. If married, married only once and the marriage must be validated according to the norms of the Church.
2. A proven ability to relate with others effectively, which is verified by letters of recommendation.
3. A personal commitment to live a healthy, balanced, prayerful, and holy lifestyle.
4. Since the deacon is not ordinarily paid for his services, he must be economically stable and free of unreasonable debt and must have the time to devote to diaconal service.
5. In good physical and psychological health as shown by a medical and psychological examination within six months of application with results given to the Director of the Permanent Diaconate. If there is a history of addiction, recovery must have a three-year history and there must be ongoing participation in a treatment program.
6. A background check reveals no criminal activity or sexual misconduct.
7. Accepts Church Law, authority, and

appreciates the Church's tradition, especially as articulated by the Second Vatican Council. Obedience to the Bishop and the priest to whom he is assigned is essential.

8. Applicant must be self-motivated, a person with integrity, responsible, a person of commitment and accountability, willing and able to assume a leadership role.

B. MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

1. A partner in a stable marriage.
2. Married for at least five years.
3. Has the expressed consent and support of his wife.
4. If children are at home, special consideration must be given to their ages and needs in discerning the timeliness of pursuing formation.
5. Clearly understand that if a man becomes a deacon and his wife should die, he is obliged to remain celibate for the rest of his life.
6. If prospective candidate is a convert, he shall have practiced Catholicism for at least five years.

C. SINGLE OR WIDOWER

Clearly understands that celibacy is a lifelong commitment for the unmarried deacon.

D. EDUCATIONAL

1. Sufficient prior educational training and intellectual ability in order to study collegiate and graduate-level theology and develop the ability to articulate the meaning to the Catholic community. Must be willing to commit to continuing education after ordination.
2. Organizational ability to manage the time and energy demands of diaconal training and ministry to his life without jeopardizing previous commitments to family and job.
3. Should have a minimum of three (3) years participation in lay leadership, religious education classes, Catholic school religion courses, adult faith formation, or a spiritual formation program.
4. Should have a sufficiently developed prayer life.

E. PARISH/AREA FAITH COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

1. A member of the parish and the Diocese for at least two (2) years.
2. Involved in parish/area ministry for a minimum of three (3) years as well as community prayer and worship and well-accepted by fellow parishioners.
3. Must be collaborative and willing to work with others, especially the pastor and parish staff.
4. Must be service-oriented, sensitive to the needs of others, willing to seek out people in need and help fill the needs.



Preparation for becoming a deacon

With acceptance into candidacy for the diaconate, preparation begins which is referred to as [the period of Aspirancy]. This preparatory period prepares the candidate for the years of formation. During this period, the aspirant will be introduced to philosophy as a foundation for theological study, spirituality, and the ministry of the deacon. There will be attention placed on a further discernment of the call to ministry.

The Aspirancy period will include a number of academic formation sessions. A greater focus, however, will be placed on prayer, reflection, and vocational discernment. During this period, if the aspirant is married, his wife will be invited to participate.

Sessions will be held one Saturday each month and will include the following topics:

- Introduction to Discernment
- Introduction to Theological Reflection
- Introduction to Spiritual Direction
- Pastoral Identity, Skills and Boundaries
- Prayer and Sacramental Participation
- Evangelization and Ecumenism, including an Introduction to the Catechism
- Research and Writing in Formation
- Introduction to Philosophy I (weekend session)
- Introduction to Philosophy II (weekend session)



The Period of Formation

The next years of formation are divided into eight semesters. These years will focus on the intellectual, spiritual and pastoral development of the candidates. All sessions are once a month, weekend sessions, beginning on Friday evening and ending on Sundays at 2:00 p.m.

Semester 1	Introduction to Scripture Systematic Theology I Spirituality and Prayer	Semester 4	Sacramental Theology II-Eucharist Old Testament Paul
Semester 2	Church History Vatican Council II and Ecclesiology Introduction to the Ministry of the Permanent Deacon	Semester 5	Introduction to Pastoral Care Christology Supervised Ministry Homiletics
Semester 3	Sacramental Theology I Synoptic Gospels The Gospel of John	Semester 6	Introduction to Liturgy American Church Religious Education Supervised Ministry Liturgical Practicum I
		Semester 7	Canon Law for Ministry Moral Theology I Liturgical Practicum II
		Semester 8	Moral Theology II Systematic Theology II Ordination Retreat

Contact information

If you are interested in pursuing the ministry of the permanent diaconate, please contact Deacon Mark Kober, Director of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate for the Diocese of New Ulm, 1400 6th Street North, New Ulm, MN 56073; phone: (507) 359-2966; email: mkober@dnu.org.

Lay Ministry

The Second Vatican Council, in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, states that "all Christians in whatever state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and the perfection of charity" (Lumen Gentium, number 40).

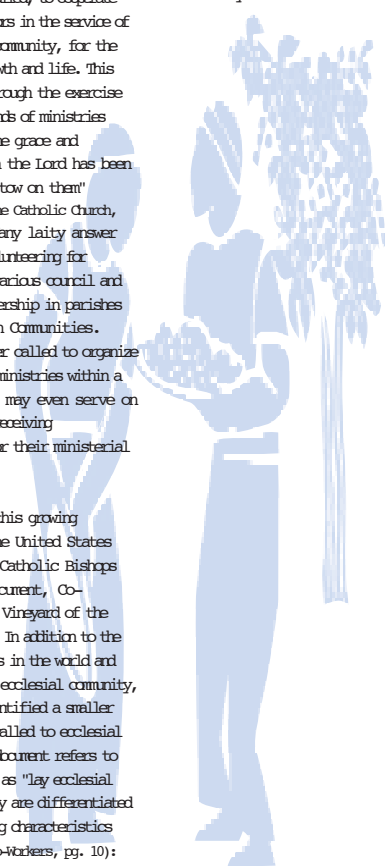
Lay men and women hear this call to holiness primarily and uniquely in their daily lives. They are especially called to make holy or sanctify the world by fulfilling responsibilities in the social and family realms.

Lay Catholics "can also feel called, or in fact be called, to cooperate with their pastors in the service of the ecclesial community, for the sake of its growth and life. This can be done through the exercise of different kinds of ministries according to the grace and charisms which the Lord has been pleased to bestow on them" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, number 910). Many laity answer this call by volunteering for ministries or various council and committee leadership in parishes and Area Faith Communities. Some are further called to organize and direct the ministries within a community and may even serve on parish staffs, receiving compensation for their ministerial service.

In describing this growing phenomenon, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops published a document, *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*, in 2005. In addition to the call to holiness in the world and service to the ecclesial community, the Bishops identified a smaller group who are called to ecclesial service. This document refers to these ministers as "lay ecclesial ministers." They are differentiated by the following characteristics (excerpt from *Co-Workers*, pg. 10):

- ♦ Recognition of Competency by the hierarchy to serve publicly in the local church;
- ♦ Leadership in a particular area of ministry;
- ♦ Close mutual collaboration with the pastoral ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons;
- ♦ Preparation and formation appropriate to the level of responsibilities that are assigned to them.

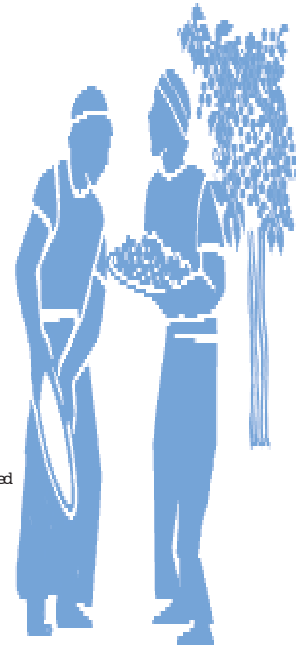
The Lay Ministry Formation programs described on page 8 of this issue, are intended to prepare and form lay ministers in the Diocese of New Ulm to live out their calling and to participate in the ministry of the Church.



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Lay Ministry throughout the diocese

All baptized Catholics are called to a life of holiness and dedication to the lay apostolate. This lay apostolate includes a mission to bring the GOOD NEWS of Jesus to the home, the neighborhood, the community, and the workplace.



Two new lay ministry formation programs now in place to help form and train lay Catholics

There are thousands of adults in the Diocese of New Ulm who are involved in the parishes and Area Faith Communities as catechists, members of youth ministry teams, liturgical ministers, and members of councils and committees.

Thanks to the DMA (Diocesan Ministries Appeal), programs are now in place to help form and train adult Catholics to carry out this responsibility.

College-level theology study and spiritual formation are currently being offered to any interested Catholic in the Diocese of New Ulm through two new programs.

FOUNDATIONS: a discipleship formation program and **Together in Communion**, a leadership formation program, will help participants to minister with greater confidence and competence. Both programs will be facilitated by faculty from Saint Mary's University of Minnesota in Winona.

FOUNDATIONS is a seven-session program, one Saturday per month (9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. at a central location within the diocese),

that is intended to provide a solid foundation in the Catholic faith tradition. **FOUNDATIONS** will be offered in the fall of 2007.

The sessions will survey the major topics and themes of theology and scripture and are taught on a freshman-sophomore college level.

This program is designed for the volunteer minister who wishes to have a basic adult formation in the Catholic faith as well as any adult who is interested in a college-level introduction to Catholicism.

BASIC MONTHLY TOPICS :

- Introduction to the Christian Scriptures
- Introduction to the Jewish Scriptures
- Introduction to Catholic Theology
- Theology of the Catholic Church/Sacraments
- Prayer and Liturgy
- Morality and the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church

PROGRAM FEES :

Participants or their parishes are responsible for meals, travel, and book or resource purchases. Participant fee with lunch is \$70. If lunch is on your own the cost is \$30.

Payment can be made in full at the time of application or in two installments, September and January.

Together in

Communion is a seven-session program, one Saturday per month (9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. at a central location within the diocese), that is designed to provide quality lay leadership formation for those who have completed **FOUNDATIONS**. **Together in Communion** will be offered in the fall of 2008.

These sessions are taught on a junior-senior collegiate level by faculty from Saint Mary's University of Minnesota in Winona. The sessions consider central Catholic doctrines in their historical expressions and include an exploration of significant eras in the history of the Church as well as key spiritualities and the saints who lived them. The program also focuses on lay holiness and each participant's development of spiritual practices.

ADVANCED MONTHLY TOPICS :

Leadership/Spirituality Workshop
Scripture, Theology and Roman Catholic Faith Tradition
Catholic Biblical Interpretation and Church History

Philosophy and Theology
Theology and Church History
Theology in Word and Image
The Call and Mission of the Baptized

Participants or their parishes are responsible for meals, travel, and book or resource purchases. (More details will be provided at a later date.)

Graduate study at Saint Mary's University

There is a need in the Diocese of New Ulm for lay persons to serve as pastoral administrators, parish workers, directors of religious education, youth ministers, liturgists, and religion teachers in Catholic schools. In order to provide graduate-level formation and training for these positions, two thirty (30) credit hour masters degrees are available through Saint Mary's University of Minnesota in Winona.

The degree programs are both conducted in a two-week intensive, on-campus format, for three summers. Coursework in preparation for the next intensives or the thesis is completed off-campus throughout the year. Degrees are offered in either pastoral ministry or pastoral administration.

If you are a full or part-time minister, talk to your pastoral leader about formal study. Some members of parish staffs may be encouraged to consider further training in order to apply for positions, such as a parish worker or pastoral administrator. Both of these positions require a masters degree. Scholarship funds for graduate study are available through the Lay Ministry Scholarship Fund.

Application information

For further information or to apply for the **FOUNDATIONS** program, please contact Bryan Reising, Director of Adult Faith Formation for the Diocese of New Ulm, 1400 6th Street North, New Ulm, MN 56073; phone: (507) 359-2966; email: breising@dnu.org.



Lay ministers, such as these, can equip themselves for ministry through **FOUNDATIONS** and **Together in Communion** which are supported by our Bishops.