

CHAPTER V.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The objective of the deacon's personal development is the shaping, consolidation, refinement, or equipping of what has already been shown to exist in the behavior, temperament, and character that originally caused him to be judged suitable for ordination to the permanent diaconate.¹ Developmental programs cannot teach a man how to be a deacon, but they can provide him with the support and experience that is helpful and necessary to the exercise of a ministry for which he has already demonstrated his ability.

Two of the principal opportunities for personal development of permanent deacons in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe are the annual weekend spiritual retreat and the annual In-Service Training Day. The importance of attendance at both of these events, first noted in Chapter IV (preceding), reiterated in §VI.F (following), and repeated here for emphasis, is paramount. Due to the cultural diversity of our diaconal community, efforts should be made to provide translations for our non-English speaking deacons and their wives as our deacon community is a microcosm of the church of the future. A deacon who finds himself **unable** for legitimate reason(s) to attend either of these gatherings must, in advance if at all possible, notify the Director or an Associate Director, in writing, in order to be excused.

A. SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Spiritual growth of the permanent deacon should be a continuous process, rooted in the fulfillment of his everyday vocation as Christian worker, husband, and father, and strengthened by profound exposure to sacred Scripture, that will find authentic expression in prayer and apostolic work. Permanent deacons experience the call to sanctity in the daily environment of their home, their workplace, and the secular community.

1. Spiritual Direction.

A deacon is encouraged to choose a well-qualified spiritual director, not only to counsel him through problems, but also to assist him in his encounters with Christ in his ministry.

2. Deanery Deacon Groups.

The Community exercises its support for each deacon at the deanery level. The regularly scheduled meetings of permanent deacons and their wives at the deanery level should be a top priority among the deacon's endeavors, an occasion on which

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individuals with diverse skills, distinctive experiences, wide-ranging interests, and collective wisdom can assist and support one another in ways of growing that are not possible when persons act singly.

B. STRENGTHENING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Because most permanent deacons are married, their spiritual growth must recognize the supernatural resource available to them and their families in the sacrament of matrimony. The way the married deacon and his wife live is a reflection of the service they render to the community. Wives and children should be supportive of the permanent deacon's spiritual growth. Although not mandatory, various programs should be made available for the wives and children of permanent deacons, including professional marriage and family counseling services.

C. PASTORAL AND ACADEMIC CONTINUING EDUCATION

Deacons, as professionals in ministry, need to update themselves continually with practical education in order to (1) provide the best possible service to the People of God, (2) ensure a feeling of self-confidence and adequacy in their ministry, and (3), demonstrate to the church they serve that they are professionally accountable. Each deacon should assure that his parish or institution of assignment budgets for and then contributes its fair (one-third) share of the legitimate cost of his continuing education. See Chapter IV of this Manual, preceding.

1. Policy.

Each permanent deacon who is granted faculties to function within the Archdiocese of Santa Fe is expected to complete a **minimum** of forty hours of continuing education each year. Hours of continuing education are determined on the basis of clock time actually spent in attending formal classes, lectures, seminars, and workshops on academic subjects related to the personal development of the deacon as an ordained minister. In individual cases where remote location and great distance make in-person attendance at formal academic gatherings a hardship, a deacon may devise a plan for acquiring the equivalent amount of continuing education by alternative means such as a self-study, correspondence courses, and directed reading. This plan must be discussed with the deacon's pastor/supervisor, then submitted to the Director. The educational portions of such gatherings as the annual In-Service Training day, the annual weekend retreat for deacons and their wives, monthly deanery meetings, and regional conferences of permanent deacons, count toward the forty hours required yearly.

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2. Continuing Education Coordinator(s).

A deacon or a deacon couple should be chosen by the Director to serve as Continuing Education Coordinator(s). This person or persons, assisted by a Diaconal Council, will organize workshops, seminars, and formal classes for pastoral, spiritual and academic continuing education. In consultation with the Director, the Continuing Education Coordinator(s) may establish the number of hours of continuing education to be approved for any program sponsored by an office within the Pastoral Ministries Division.

3. Reporting Continuing Education.

Annually, in January, each permanent deacon is required to submit, in writing, a report of continuing education received over the preceding twelve-month period. (See sample of the form in Appendix D) Those deacons who fail to submit the requested report and who repeatedly disregard the policy requiring earnest efforts at personal development will be charitably called to fraternal correction. As a last resort, the Director may recommend to the Archbishop that the faculties of the delinquent deacon be withdrawn. Deacons are required to continue their education in the area of their ministry.

Notes for Chapter V

1. *Service Ministry of the Deacon*, Rev. Timothy J. Shugrue, Bishop's Committee on the Permanent diaconate (Washington, D.C.: National council of catholic Bishops, 1988) p.71.

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