

**Diocese of Easton**  
**Policy on Preparation for the Diaconate**

Canon 6, Sec.3 of the National Canons outlines the steps leading to the ordination of deacons. Sec. 3(a) gives Bishops latitude in establishing formation guidelines. To assist those persons in the Diocese of Easton, the Bishop of Easton, in consultation with the Commission on Ministry, has established guidelines for candidates in their preparation in the five general areas outlined in Canon 6, Sec. 3(b)

**CANON 6**

**Sec. 3: Preparation for Ordination**

(a) The Bishop, in consultation with the Commission, shall determine the length of time and extent of formation needed to prepare each Candidate for ordination.

(b) Before ordination each Candidate shall be prepared in and demonstrate basic competence in five general areas:

(1) Academic studies including, The Holy Scriptures, theology, and tradition of the church.

*Academic studies should lead to: thorough knowledge of the Bible; basic knowledge of the Church's doctrine, liturgy, history, ethics, moral theology and spiritual tradition; identifying ancient heresies in today's Church; reflecting theologically on contemporary concerns. Candidates must work with the Commission on Ministry to create an acceptable plan of study to develop competency in the required areas. This plan of study must be developed with the Commission at the beginning of the Candidate's period of formation. The following programs may be used as resources.*

(i) Sewanee School of Theology's four-year program *Education for Ministry*. This program provides theological education in the Old and New Testaments, church history, liturgy, and theology. Students meet once a week in seminars under guidance of a trained mentor.

(ii) Theological Studies at the Evening School of Theology of Virginia Theological Seminary. Courses included are: Introduction to Christian Theology; Introduction to Old Testament; Introduction to New Testament; the Worship of the Church. Classes are taught by members of the Virginia Theological Seminary faculty and are held on campus on weekday evenings. Tuition is modest thanks to a bequest.

(iii) Masters level courses at Loyola College in Maryland, the Ecumenical Institute at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore or other approved schools. Depending on the Candidate's academic background and educational needs, courses may include: Old

Testament, New Testament, Theology, tradition of the Church (history, liturgy, doctrine).

(iv) Mentor/Tutor Program which provides for study over a minimum of three years. Candidates will meet with mentor/tutor for a minimum of 1 and ½ hours weekly with outside assignments. Testing of students is expected. Mentors/tutors will be provided by the Commission on Ministry in six areas which will include study in Holy Scriptures, theology and the tradition of the Church. Mentors/tutors will NOT be assigned to candidates from their own parishes. Candidates using this alternative may substitute courses from programs (i) through (iii) listed above.

(v) Online courses will be considered on an individual basis.

(2) Diakonia and the diaconate

*The candidate shall complete a semester course dealing with the diaconate. This could be one given by a theological education program or one provided by the Diocese of Easton or another diocese.*

(3) Human awareness and understanding

*The candidate shall demonstrate through their life experience and education that they are:*

- *developing the capacity to relate to others;*
- *entering into dialogue with those who differ, including their interpretation of theology and scripture;*
- *articulating biases in race, sex, culture, and class;*
- *dealing with people of diverse ages and generations.*

(4) Spiritual development and discipline

*The candidate shall demonstrate through their life experience and current practice that they:*

- *observe Sunday Eucharist, daily prayer and read Scripture;*
- *are developing commitment, accountability and obedience;*
- *are using resources such as spiritual direction, reading and retreats;*
- *practice in sharing the love of Christ.*
- *have identified a spiritual advisor whose name shall be named to the Bishop. Additionally, a plan for meeting and regular consultation with that spiritual advisor shall be submitted in writing to the Bishop.*

(5) Practical training and experience

*The candidate shall:*

- *complete one (1) unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE).*

- *perform supervised field work in other congregations and ministry sites.*
- *practice for the deacon's role in liturgy under the mentorship of a deacon.*
- *participate in any meetings of the Community of Deacons.*
- *show a commitment to ministry in the world.*

(c) The formation process shall include sexual misconduct prevention training, training regarding Title IV of these Canons, and anti-racism training.

(d) Formation shall reflect the local culture and each Candidate's background, age, occupation, and ministry. Prior education and learning from life experience may be considered as part of the formation required for ordination.

(e) Wherever possible, formation shall take place in community, including persons in preparation for the diaconate, or others preparing for ministry.

Revised March 11, 2006