



## Diocese of LaCrosse Office of Deacon Formation

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### Discernment Retreat Overview

#### For Men Considering the Permanent Diaconate

February 1-2, 2019 ✪ St. Anthony Spirituality Center, Marathon

#### **What is a discernment retreat?**

Discernment of a Christian vocation is not like applying for a job. By its very nature, a Christian vocation is a great mystery and a personal call of Jesus Christ to follow and serve him in a particular way. A call to the permanent diaconate is likely to come to a man who may already have committed himself to the vocation of Christian marriage and family life, though not exclusively. There is much to consider – Do I have a call? How will it affect my family? When is the right time to begin formation? What am I committing myself to, and my family? These are some of the typical questions of men experiencing a possible call to the permanent diaconate and needing help with discernment.

Because the diaconate is a call from Jesus Christ to holy orders in the Church, discernment must be done within the context of prayer and reflection. The purpose of the discernment retreat is to provide a proper place and time for prayer and reflection based on a series of conferences centered on the nature and vocation of the permanent diaconate.

#### **What kind of commitment am I making by coming to the retreat?**

Attendance at the discernment retreat carries no expectation that you will apply to the Deacon Formation Program. But the retreat is a prerequisite for any man who does wish to apply. This is just a first step to see whether or not you may be experiencing this call from Christ. The discernment retreat is also a prerequisite for men who have temporarily withdrawn from deacon formation and now wish to return.

#### **If I am married, should my wife come on this retreat?**

Attendance by your wife is not mandatory; however, discernment cannot take place without her at some point. A call to the permanent diaconate for a man who is married has a direct effect on his wife and family. A wife's presence on the retreat is encouraged and welcomed. Wives of aspirants, candidates, and ordained deacons will lead a special conference just for wives. They will share their own stories and experiences about diaconal formation and ministry from a wives perspective.

#### **How do I register?**

Confer first with your pastor, sharing your desire to discern this vocation and seeking his counsel. Then you may contact the Office for Ministries and Social Concerns of the Diocese of La Crosse (608-791-0191 or [ministries@diolc.org](mailto:ministries@diolc.org)). You can also visit the diocesan website, [www.diolc.org/diaconate](http://www.diolc.org/diaconate), for more help and for information on the Permanent Diaconate.

# Discernment Retreat Schedule

Feb. 1-2, 2019 ✠ St. Anthony Spirituality Center, Marathon

## Friday, February 1

- 7:00 pm Opening prayer, conference: Formation of the Deacon (Fr. William Felix)
- 7:45 Classroom Visit (½ to “Synoptic Gospels,” ½ to “Life in Christ”)
- 8:45 Conference: Liturgy and Prayer in Deacon Formation (Chris Carstens)
- 9:30 Night Prayer

## Saturday, February 4

- 6:40 am Morning Prayer and Holy Mass
- 8:00 Breakfast
- 8:30 Classroom Visit (½ to “Synoptic Gospels,” ½ to “Life in Christ”)
- 9:30 Conference: The Ministry & Life of Deacons (Deacon Bob Hansen and Guest Deacons)
- 10:30 Conference: The Sacramental Character of the Diaconate (Fr. Justin Kizewski)
- 11:40 Devotions
- Noon Lunch
- 1:00 Discussion (Fr. Felix, Deacons Bob Hansen, Jerry Rynda and Guest Deacons)
- 2:00 Conference: Diaconal Vocation and Discernment, Including the Role of the Family in Discernment, Formation, and Diaconal Ministry (Guest Deacons and Wives)
- 3:30 Conference: Overview of Academic, Spiritual and Pastoral Formation (Chris Ruff, Fr. Kizewski, Deacon Jerry Rynda, Deacon Bob Hansen)
- 5:00 Evening Prayer
- 5:15 Dinner
- 6:00 Panel Discussion, Question-and-Answer Session (Guest Deacons, Wives, Staff)
- 7:00 Blessing and Departure