



Mentoring Program for Newly Ordained Deacons
Office of Deacon Personnel
Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey

INTRODUCTION

The Archdiocese of Newark is aware of the critical importance of a deacon's first years in ministry and the need to ensure a smooth transition from diaconal formation to ordained ministry.

Out of genuine concern for Newly Ordained Deacons, Archbishop Myers has urged more experienced deacons to become partners and advisors with the newly ordained in helping them grapple with the first and sometimes formidable challenges of their ministry. The Newly Ordained Deacons need the wisdom and good counsel of those ordained longer. It is for this reason we begin our *Mentoring Program for Newly Ordained Deacons*. The goal of the program is quite simple: through the benefits and blessings of brotherhood to companion those entering diaconal ministry so as to enter with ease of mind, heart and spirit.

Mentoring Program for Newly Ordained Deacons is our response to our Archbishop and the Council of Bishops. The *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States*¹ calls for the development of just such mentoring programs. In terms of length, the Directory calls for a program of mentoring for a period of three (3) years beginning shortly after ordination. As for objectives, it is meant to assist the deacon in developing and integrating the multiple dimensions of formation into his life and ministry. As for expected outcomes, the hope is that mentoring will grow the spark of the Spirit that first moved the Newly Ordained Deacon to discern God's call.

The Directory refers to the post-ordination formation as “a human necessity which must be seen in continuity with the divine call to serve the church in the ministry....”² In other words, continuing formation through mentoring is not an option; ministerial service in the Church demands it. Saint Paul's letter to Timothy states: “do not neglect the gifts you have, which were conferred on you through the prophetic word with the imposition of hands. Be diligent in these matters, be absorbed in them, so that your progress may be evident to everyone. Attend to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in both tasks, for by doing so you will save both yourself and those who listen to you.”³

Mentor Qualifications in the Archdiocese of Newark

Mandatory Qualifications

1. Designation as a Deacon Mentor occurs only with the approval and written appointment by the Archbishop of Newark.
2. Deacon Mentors must be permanent deacons, since part of the mentoring process: a) requires helping the Newly Ordained Deacon understand what it means to be a cleric immersed in the secular world, b) includes advising and counseling the Newly Ordained Deacon on how to balance the demands of marriage, secular occupation, formation and ministry, and c) involving the Newly Ordained Deacon in active diaconal ministry. If a suitable number of qualified deacons cannot be identified to serve as Deacon Mentors, priests who are qualified should be enlisted to serve in this capacity. (For the purpose of this document, Deacon Mentors hereafter will be assumed to be permanent deacons but that reference in no way will limit the Archbishop's ability to appoint priests to that duty.)
3. No one may serve as a Deacon Mentor unless he has been ordained for a minimum of five (5) years.
4. Deacon Mentors must be incardinated in the Archdiocese of Newark and have been in active ministry for a minimum of five (5) years of service within the Archdiocese.
5. Deacon Mentors must be listed with an "Active" status according to the records maintained in the Office of Deacon Personnel. Even if the Archbishop has elected to allow a retired deacon to retain his faculties he may not serve as a Deacon Mentor with a "Retired" status.
6. Deacon Mentors must be in good standing in the Archdiocese of Newark.
7. Deacon Mentors must: a) have a current parish assignment and ministry agreement, b) be and remain current with respect to their obligation to attend an annual retreat, c) have a signed Archdiocesan Code of Conduct and Supplemental Norms for Clergy Acknowledgement form d) Background check and Safe Environment Training e) be active with respect to their obligation for continuing education and formation.
8. Deacon Mentors must be actively involved in one or more ministries in their parish or community.

9. Deacon Mentors must have attended the Archdiocese of Newark's Deacon Mentor Education Program and agree to attend update sessions as needed.
10. Deacon Mentors must willingly and enthusiastically embrace the task of mentoring a Newly Ordained Deacon and dedicate the necessary time and energy to the effort.
11. Deacon Mentors must agree to meet with the Newly Ordained Deacon assigned to them on a monthly basis at a minimum. Deacon Mentors with more than one Newly Ordained Deacon may meet with both men simultaneously not more than quarterly. Therefore only one out of every three meetings may be held with more than one Newly Ordained Deacon.
12. Deacon Mentor and Newly Ordained Deacon meetings must last for at least one (1) hour in duration and focus on specific elements of Diaconal Ministry. The meeting may not simply be a general conversation on topics unrelated to diaconal ministry, formation, etc.
13. Deacon Mentors may not be assigned more than two (2) Newly Ordained Deacons to mentor.
14. Deacon Mentors must be willing to accept information from the Mentor Committee regarding mentoring of the Newly Ordained Deacon assigned to them and incorporate that information into their process.
15. Deacon Mentors must agree to provide their input to the Director of Deacon Personnel, through the Mentor Committee. This input will be solicited in writing a minimum of once per year and on an "as needed" basis determined by the Mentor Committee. An annual report will be made to the Archbishop and a copy of the evaluation placed in the deacons file.
16. The Deacon Mentor and the Newly Ordained Deacon may be from the same parish.
17. While the discussions and interactions between a Deacon Mentor and Newly Ordained Deacon are not conducted in the internal forum, the Deacon Mentor must remain committed to keeping in confidence the specifics about those interactions which either by their nature or by mutual agreement should be held confidential. This in no way restricts the Deacon Mentor's ability to provide input regarding the deacon's progress.

Recommended Qualifications

1. The Deacon Mentor and Newly Ordained Deacon should share the same marital state. If the Newly Ordained Deacon is married the Deacon Mentor should be married.

Section 3. MENTOR SELECTION PROCESS

Successful relationships typically begin right from the start and mentoring relationships are no exception. A great relationship between a Deacon Mentor and the Newly Ordained Deacon can prove to be invaluable to the man's continued formation and result in not only a mentor – Newly Ordained Deacon relationship but an enduring friendship for years to come. A mentoring relationship that proves to be less than an ideal fit can lead to frustration for the Deacon Mentor and the Newly Ordained Deacon and actually serve as a detriment to the post-formation process. Therefore, care must be exercised in the selection of Deacon Mentors for each Newly Ordained Deacon.

Mentor selection is an inexact science. To enhance the probability that Deacon Mentors and Newly Ordained Deacons are well matched, the selection process is a collaborative effort involving the Mentor Committee, Director of Deacon Personnel, prospective Deacon Mentors, pastors and the Newly Ordained Deacon.

The Mentor Selection process for the Archdiocese of Newark is detailed below.

Mentor Selection Process

1. The first step is to determine which deacons in the Archdiocese are willing to serve as Deacon Mentors. Annually, all active deacons who have been ordained at least five years will be considered by the committee to serve as a Deacon Mentor for the coming year. (See attached application A.) The letter (B) to the deacons will contain information about the program for Newly Ordained Deacons and articulate the qualifications and responsibilities that the Deacon Mentor takes on as a Deacon Mentor.
2. Deacons who indicate a willingness to serve the Archdiocese as Deacon Mentors will be invited to a Deacon Mentor workshop. **Attendance at the workshop is mandatory for all who wish to serve as Deacon Mentors.** After attending the Deacon Mentor workshop, no deacon will be required to attend again unless the content of the workshop changes or the deacon requires additional training.
3. The Deacon Mentor workshop will address mentoring in general, mentoring adults, mentoring men in ministry specifically and the roles and responsibilities of the Deacon Mentor and Newly Ordained Deacon.
4. The deacons who attend the Deacon Mentor workshop will receive a

letter from the Archbishop (C) appointing them to serve as Deacon Mentors. These deacons will have their names added to the list of deacons qualified to serve as Deacon Mentors. The list of qualified Deacon Mentors will be maintained by the Office of Deacon Personnel.

5. The list of qualified Deacon Mentors will be distributed to the Newly Ordained Deacons by mail and the list will also be maintained on the Diaconate website:
http://www.rcan.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=category.display&category_id=64
6. The Newly Ordained Deacon must review the list of Deacon Mentors; then contact and meet with two or more deacons as potential mentors. Any deacon on the list of qualified Deacon Mentors may be contacted by the Newly Ordained Deacon.
7. It is strongly recommended that Newly Ordained Deacons meet with at least two or more potential Deacon Mentors. The purpose of the initial meeting is for the two men to engage each other in conversation and generally get to know each other. It is highly desirable that the men are candid, open and direct with each other in this initial meeting. A mentoring relationship that is comfortable for both Deacon Mentor and Newly Ordained Deacon will be most fruitful.
8. Each Newly Ordained Deacon will submit up to three (3) names of potential Deacon Mentors to the Director of Deacon Personnel on the **“Request for Approval of Deacon Mentor” Form D**. Prior to submitting the Request for Approval of Deacon Mentor form to the Director of Deacon Personnel, the Newly Ordained Deacon should request permission to include each deacon as one of their potential mentors. Only those deacons that grant their consent may be listed.
9. When listing potential Deacon Mentors, the Newly Ordained Deacon should list them in order of their preference.
10. The Newly Ordained Deacon must submit a Request for Approval of Deacon Mentor form (Form D) two months after ordination. This form must also be used anytime a Newly Ordained Deacon is changing Deacon Mentors.
11. The Director of Deacon Personnel will verify that the potential deacons proposed as Deacon Mentors are all qualified and listed as such with the Office of Deacon personnel.
12. The Director of Deacon Personnel, in collaboration with the Mentoring Committee, will approve and assign one of the proposed Deacon Mentors to the Newly Ordained Deacon, unless doing so would cause

the Deacon Mentor to have more than two Newly Ordained Deacons to mentor.

13. Once the Deacon Mentor selection has been approved, the Director of Deacon Personnel will write the name of the assigned Deacon Mentor on the Request for Approval of Deacon Mentor form (Form D) and return the form to the Newly Ordained Deacons to be placed in the Formation Notebook. A copy of the approval of Deacon Mentor Form will also be sent to the Deacon Mentor.
14. If none of the proposed deacons can be assigned to the Newly Ordained Deacon because doing so would cause the deacon to have more than two men to mentor, the Newly Ordained Deacon must continue his search for a qualified mentor. The Director of Deacon Personnel and the Mentoring Committee will provide assistance to the Newly Ordained Deacon so that a suitable, qualified Deacon Mentor may be found.
15. In the event a Newly Ordained Deacon loses his Deacon Mentor through the deacon's death, retirement, excommunication, or other reason, the Newly Ordained Deacon must submit a new Request for Approval of Deacon Mentor form to the Director of Deacon Personnel within 60 days of the Newly Ordained Deacon becoming aware his Deacon Mentor can no longer continue providing this vital contribution to his on-going formation.

Section 4. MENTORING OBJECTIVES

1. To continue personal and ministerial support, pastoral and spiritual development begun with the Formation Program.
2. To assist the Newly Ordained Deacon in continuing human, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral formation.
3. To assist the Newly Ordained Deacon in developing healthy and effective ministry relationships with the deacon's pastor, the pastoral team and others in ministry with him.
4. To assist the Newly Ordained Deacon and his family in developing support systems for prayer, ministry and diaconal fraternity.
5. To have available to the Newly Ordained Deacon and his family a steady companion while on the journey.

Section 5. MENTORING MEETINGS

Meetings should be scheduled monthly or more frequently if desired. The setting should be comfortable but not casual. Although meetings may begin with a meal, a restaurant is never an appropriate setting. Time together should be uninterrupted by phone.

Meetings are confidential. Exceptions to this norm would be if the Newly Ordained Deacon gives his permission for a release of information or if situations would arise involving civil or criminal statutes (e.g. child or spousal abuse) or problems of a destructive nature (e.g. alcohol dependency, drug abuse, suicide) where the law or good judgment would indicate the need to report the incident.

The Deacon Mentor's role is one of listening and offering counsel. He is not a supervisor, an evaluator of performance or a reporter to the Archbishop, the regional Dean/Vicar or the pastor.

The Deacon Mentor is not a problem-solver nor is he to intervene directly to resolve problems between the Newly Ordained Deacon and his pastor or others. In these situations, he is to encourage the Newly Ordained Deacon to resolve matters on his own. If problems remain unresolved, he may encourage the Newly Ordained Deacon to speak with the Director of Deacon Personnel.

The Deacon Mentor may inquire of the deacon, among other things, about family life, spiritual reading and prayer life; about the regularity of meetings with the spiritual director; about how things are going in the parish - frustrations, accomplishments. He is also free to share his own experiences of ministry to help the Newly Ordained Deacon see the joys of ministry and sometimes its 'ups and downs.'

Meetings should begin and conclude with prayer.

Section 6. VARIOUS PERSONNEL AND ROLES

Director of Deacon Personnel oversees the program

Newly Ordained Deacon

Deacon Mentor is a deacon appointed by the Archbishop for this role. Each Newly Ordained Deacon chooses his Deacon Mentor from the list of those so approved.

Pastor who serves as the deacon's supervisor unless otherwise specified. The pastor's supervisory role is never usurped by the Deacon Mentor.

Spiritual Director is someone other than the pastor and Deacon Mentor and with whom the Newly Ordained Deacon meets regularly. Communication with the Spiritual Director is always confidential. Neither the pastor nor Deacon Mentor is to ever consult or communicate with the Spiritual Director.

Sample Letter Soliciting Deacon Mentors (B)

June 1, 2010

Rev. Mr. John Doe
123 Elm St.
Newark, NJ 07104

Dear Deacon Doe:

I pray that you are well. I am writing to solicit your assistance with the Archdiocese of Newark's permanent diaconate mentoring program for Newly Ordained Deacons. Each year we contact the diaconate community to find out which deacons are willing and able to serve in the capacity of Deacon Mentor to a Newly Ordained Deacon.

The qualifications to be a Deacon Mentor are attached. I should point out that in order to serve as a Deacon Mentor, you must attend a Deacon Mentor orientation session. We will be offering the orientation session on two occasions, _____ at _____ and _____ at _____. Both of these orientation sessions will be held at the Archdiocesan Center and last for approximately 2 – 3 hours.

With your consent to serve as a Deacon Mentor, we will place your name on the list of prospective Deacon Mentors and circulate that list to all of our Newly Ordained Deacons. You may be contacted by one or more Newly Ordained Deacons for an initial "get together" meeting so that you and the Newly Ordained Deacon may assess if you will do well together in a mentor relationship. Each newly ordained deacon will submit up to three names to the Director of Deacon Personnel who will make the final Deacon Mentor selection for each Newly Ordained Deacon. If you are selected as a Deacon Mentor, you will receive an appointment letter from the Archbishop.

Thank you in advance for your prayerful consideration of this service to the Newly Ordained Deacon and the Archdiocese. The assistance and guidance that you provide to a Newly Ordained Deacon helps to build a stronger Diaconate in our local Church and greatly benefits the people of God.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (973) 497-4125 or mckennjo@rcan.org.

In Christ

Director of Deacon Personnel

B

Sample Appointment Letter From the Archbishop (C)

July 6, 2010

Rev. Mr. John Doe
123 Elm St.
Newark, NJ 07104

Dear Deacon Doe:

The Director of Deacon Personnel has recommended you to me for appointment as a Deacon Mentor. The Deacon Mentor plays an instrumental role in the mentoring of our Newly Ordained Deacons and we are grateful that you are willing to undertake this important ministry.

I hereby approve your nomination and appoint you to serve as a Deacon Mentor to the Newly Ordained Deacon the Mentoring Committee has assigned to you. Your appointment is effective immediately for a period of _____ years.

Thank you for your willingness to serve in this important endeavor.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

C
Request for Approval of Deacon Mentor (D)

To: Deacon John McKenna, Director of Deacon Personnel
Archdiocese of Newark
171 Clifton Avenue
Newark, NJ 07104

Dear Deacon McKenna:

I hereby request that one of the following three Deacons be assigned as my Deacon Mentor:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

I have spoken with these three Deacons and each has indicated that he would willingly accept the responsibility to serve as my Deacon Mentor. We both understand that any change in the approved Deacon Mentor requires prior approval by the Director of Deacon Personnel. My Deacon Mentor is open to receiving comments, suggestions and information in my progression in Diaconal Ministry and understands his obligations as a Deacon Mentor.

Newly Ordained Deacon

Signed: _____

Name (print) _____

Date: _____

Form D

Approval of Deacon Mentor (E)

To: Deacon _____

From: Director of Deacon Personnel

Date:

Re:

The Deacon Mentor assigned to you is _____.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

E

END NOTES

¹ *National Directory*, Chapter VII, Section III, 118

² *National Directory*, Chapter VII, Section I, 239: 113; see also Congregation for the Clergy, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of the Permanent Deacons (Directorium Pro Ministerio et Vita Diaconorum Permanentium)* (Washington, D.C: United States Catholic Conference, 1998), No.71, 63.

³1 Timothy 4:14 - 16

**Archdiocese of Newark
Office of Deacon Personnel
Application for Mentoring**

Main Application

Name: _____
 Last First Middle

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____
 City State Zip

Parish/School/Agency Assignment: _____ Number of years _____

Ordination date: _____

Home Phone: _____
 Area Code Number

Work Phone: _____
 Area Code Number

Cell Phone: _____
 Area Code Number

Email Address: _____

Archdiocese of Newark Questionnaire

Do you have a current Ministry Agreement? ___ Yes ___ No

Do you attend Continuing Education Courses sponsored by the Office of Deacon Personnel?
___ Yes ___ No

List additional course work if any _____

Are you willing to mentor? 1 year _____ 2 years _____ 3 years _____

What languages do you speak? _____

Additional Questions:

What interests you about mentoring? _____

What has prepared you for mentoring? _____

List ministries currently engaged in: _____
