

Requirements for Admission

The St. Francis School of Theology for Deacons has an established a set of procedures, requisite criteria and policies, which govern the application process. Below is a summary of the requirements which a man must meet in order to be considered for Diaconal formation.

Fully Initiated Catholic

The man must be Baptized and have received Confirmation and First Holy Communion.

Discernment Retreat

A mandatory vocation discernment retreat is required to be eligible to submit an application to St. Francis School of Theology for Deacons. The half-day retreats are scheduled throughout the year prior to the establishment of a new class.

Irregularities for Reception of Orders

Canon Law governs the irregularities which prohibit a man from entering Holy Orders. Prior to accepting an application, all irregularities must be sanitized (resolved) in accordance with Church Law. Irregularities according to Canon 1041 include:

1. a person who labors under some form of amentia or psychic illness;
2. a person who has committed the delict of apostasy, heresy, or schism;
3. a person who has attempted marriage, even only civilly, while either impeded personally from entering marriage by a matrimonial bond, sacred orders, or a public perpetual vow of chastity, or with a woman bound by a valid marriage or restricted by the same type of vow;
4. a person who has committed voluntary homicide or procured a completed abortion and all those who positively cooperated in either;
5. a person who has mutilated himself or another gravely and maliciously or who has attempted suicide;
6. a person who has placed an act of orders reserved to those in the order episcopate or presbyterate while either lacking that order or prohibited from its exercise by some declared or imposed canonical penalty.

Those men with obvious and visible tattoos or body piercings will additionally be evaluated as to whether or not the tattoos or piercings might bring scandal to the Church.

Age

A man must be at least 35 years old at the time of ordination and must begin formation before his 61st birthday.

Psychological Testing

A battery of psychological testing is required which will include the MMPI, personality, behavior assessment and other appropriate tests. A behavioral assessment may be given more than once during the formation process. The applicant must give his consent for these tests to be administered.

Church Service

The man must have at least two years of liturgical or other service to the Church immediately preceding an application to the St. Francis School of Theology for Deacons. At least one year of the two-year requirement needs to have been in the parish in which he is registered.

Married

A married man must be living in a valid sacramental marriage for a minimum of 5 years prior to submitting an application.

Also, the practice of the Catholic faith must be the established tradition within his family, which includes not only the man and his wife, but also any children living in the home. The practice of the faith must be established, routine, and in keeping with the precepts of the Church, and serve as an example to the community.

Single (not married)

A man considering the Permanent Diaconate under the age of 50 who has never been married is required to consider the priesthood as a possible vocation prior to submitting an application. It must be clear that God is calling the man to the Order of Deacon.

Widowed

A widowed man must be in his current state of life for a minimum of 5 years at the time of his application being submitted.

Divorced

A divorced applicant must have an annulment of his previous marriage prior to submitting an application to the St. Francis School of Theology for Deacons and must demonstrate a history of providing financial support for any minor children of the annulled marriage. The Screening and Admissions Committee also will very carefully scrutinize how well he has fulfilled his other (non-financial) responsibilities of fatherhood. Additionally, the man must have been divorced for at least 5 years prior to submitting an application to the St. Francis School of Theology for Deacons.

Previous Marriages

The man who is considering the Permanent Diaconate cannot have more than two marriages, regardless of how the previous marriages may have ended. In other words, if the man is currently married, he can only have one previous marriage. Any man with more than two marriages, whether divorced or widowed, will not be considered.

The wife of an Inquirer should not be married more than two times whether the prior marriages ended in divorce or the death of her husband. If the wife has been in more than two marriages, the Screening and Admissions Committee will evaluate all of the factors involved in the previous marriages.

Wife of the Man

A married man cannot be considered for the diaconate without the consent of his wife. The wife must give her consent for the application process to begin and at each phase to which the man is promoted. The wife will be informed as to the nature and demands of diaconal ministry and will have the knowledge needed to give appropriate consent for her husband to apply and be promoted to the various stages of formation, including ordination.

Therefore, the wife must participate in formation, which is different than that of her husband. The formation of the wife is designed to provide her a better understanding of the ministry towards which her husband is being formed.

Neophyte to the Faith

A man who is new to the faith must be a faithfully practicing Catholic for a minimum of 5 years prior to submitting an application

The Use of Contraceptives and Sterilization

The use of contraceptives, especially those of an abortive nature, constitutes a grave and moral evil. Married Inquirers who currently use contraceptives will not be accepted. Those who have repented of such behaviors and can testify to living a married life in concert with the teachings of the Church can continue with the application process.

Health

The physical health of a man seeking admission must be good. The health condition of the man's wife will also be considered.

Use of Illegal Drugs

The current use of illegal drugs will disqualify a man from the application process or from continuing in formation. Recovery from the use of illegal drugs for a minimum of 5 years is required before submitting an application to the St. Francis School of Theology for Deacons. This also applies to the wife.

Marijuana Policy

Although legalized in Colorado, men in formation for the Permanent Diaconate are prohibited from smoking, consuming, ingesting, purchasing, possessing, transporting or distributing marijuana in any form or amount.

Excessive Use of Alcohol

The current inappropriate use of alcohol will disqualify a man from the application process or from continuing in formation. Recovery from the inappropriate use/dependency of alcohol for a minimum of 5 years is required before submitting an application. This also applies to the wife.

Pornography and Other Addictive Behaviors

The current practice or engagement in addictive behaviors, such as pornography, excessive gambling, and inappropriate and/or sinful sexual activity will disqualify a man from applying or continuing in formation. Recovery from the previous practice or engagement in such addictive behaviors for a minimum of 5 years is required before submitting an application.

Residency

The man must be a Citizen or Permanent Resident of the United States and must have lived in the Archdiocese of Denver for no less than 2 years prior to submitting an application. The man and his family must also be a registered parishioner in his parish in the Archdiocese of Denver for a minimum of 1 year at the time of his application.

Transferring from Formation in Another Diocese

A man participating in formation in another diocese who moves directly to the Archdiocese of Denver and who seeks to continue his formation must meet with the Director of Formation to determine the feasibility of such a request. The prospective candidate must meet all of the policy and requisite criteria established for the Archdiocese of Denver, including residency requirements. He must provide a transcript of previous formation and a letter of recommendation from the director of his previous house of formation. A transferee's continuation in formation is neither automatic nor guaranteed.

Concerning Language

Regardless of the first language of the Inquirer, he must demonstrate the ability to understand and communicate in English. He also must demonstrate the ability to think, reason and comprehend theological and social concepts in English.

Education Requirements

An applicant to the diaconate must have a high school or GED diploma. He also must be capable of college level work. Men educated in Mexico must have graduated from at least Secondary schooling or will need to acquire a GED.

Tuition and Fees

There are several fees associated with formation. Fees for psychometric assessments are the applicant's responsibility as are all book, vestments and registration fees after the man is accepted. Financial assistance may be available through the school for deacons, or the applicant's parish.

The tuition is \$500 per year (\$250 per semester) for the Spirituality (year 1) and Candidacy Years (years 3-4). Psychological testing will cost the Aspirant approximately \$150 and the credit and background check will cost approximately \$50. Additionally, the man in formation is responsible for buying books needed for classes. The man in formation is encouraged to approach his pastor to determine if there is tuition assistance available through the parish. The St. Francis School of Theology for Deacons also may provide limited tuition assistance. No man will be denied formation because of an inability to pay.