QUALITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF A DEACON

The National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons prepared by the United States Catholic Bishops sets guidelines and gives direction relative to selection, discernment and preparation of qualified men for diaconal ministry.


If men are to be considered for this special ministry, they should provide witness as Catholic men and leaders in the Church. Deacons are called by the Holy Spirit through the Church. Thus, it is the responsibility of both the man and the Church community to discern who should be called as deacons to serve in the ministries of Word, liturgy and charity.

Spiritual and evangelical qualities prevalent in diaconal ministry include¹:

SOUND FAITH
GOOD CHRISTIAN REPUTATION
ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN PARISH AND COMMUNITY LIFE
PERSONAL INTEGRITY
MATURE
PURITY
REGULAR PARTICIPATION IN THE CHURCH’S SACRAMENTAL LIFE
EVIDENCE OF RECOGNIZED, ONGOING COMMITMENT TO THE CHURCH’S LIFE AND SERVICE
PARTICIPATION IN FAITH ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES
IF MARRIED: POSITIVE AND STABLE MARRIAGE REFLECTING THE CHURCH’S TEACHINGS ON MARRIAGE AND FAMILY
IF SINGLE: MATURE CELIBATE STATE OF LIFE
ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY
CAPACITY FOR OBEDIENCE AND FRATERNAL COMMUNION
DEEP SPIRITUALITY AND PRAYER LIFE
DEMONSTRATED KINDNESS AND HUMILITY
COMMITMENTS TO FAMILY, CAREER, EMPLOYMENT, COMMUNITY AND CHURCH SERVICE

Additionally, there are patterns of behavior that give clues into a man’s propensity for diaconal service, including:

- Natural inclination to service
- Psychological integrity
- Capacity for dialogue, docility and openness
- Ability to share one’s faith
- Openness to other points of view
- Capacity to listen carefully
- Respect of other’s religion, race, gender, ethnicity, and culture
- Good communication skills
- Sense of responsibility
- Situational appropriateness in conduct
- Self-directed & able to work collaboratively
- Accountability
- Balanced and prudential judgment
- Generosity in service
- Ability to lead, motivate, facilitate, animate others into action and service

Pastors and their and church communities are crucial when encouraging men in their first stirrings to the call to serve the Church. Men so called should display a vibrant spiritual life and if married a strong, Catholic spousal witness. As such, married men are required to have the consent of their wife and family as they come forward to make application to become a deacon in the Diocese of Cheyenne.

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2 ibid.