

**Excerpt from the revised (2010) Directory of Policy and Procedures for Deacons (pages 21 – 24)**

**CONTINUING EDUCATION**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

a. The permanent deacon's primary vocation to holiness, to be realized in his specific state and mission, demands that he be open to and actively engaged in both spiritual and educational programs designed to further his continued formation and effectiveness. This commitment relies not only upon a permanent deacon's willingness to continue his growth, but also to demonstrate it through personal accountability. It is a commitment based upon self-motivation and self-direction, which enhances each permanent deacon's ministry to the community to which he is called to serve. It is through study, reading, and especially prayer that deacons deepen their own Catholic faith, enrich their ministry, and encourage others by their example to grow in their discipleship of Jesus.

b. The *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States* requires that each diocese establish a minimum number of continuing education hours to be completed and reported annually by all active deacons. This does not include, but is in addition to, the requisite annual deacon retreat (*Directory*, 254).

c. The scope and nature of instruction should encompass the four (4) general dimensions of a deacon's ministry: human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. The continuous updating of these dimensions is necessary in order to maintain the deacon's ability to properly minister to the people of God in both Sacrament and charity. The application is to both present and future ministry (*Directory* 245-249).

**2. POLICY**

a. All permanent deacons given faculties and active with the Diocese of Phoenix are required to successfully complete and document a minimum of thirty-six (36) hours (Continuing Education Units or CEUs) each calendar year. Retired permanent deacons are encouraged to fulfill this requirement to the best of their ability.

b. Eighteen (18) of the requisite 36 CEU credits are awarded through documented attendance at the following mandatory events/trainings.

- Annual Deacon Congress – 7 CEU
- Bishop's Annual Convocation of Deacons – 7 CEU
- Call to Protect update – 2 CEU
- Annual Deanery Deacon Meeting - 2 CEU

c. The additional 18 CEUs may be accrued in whole or in part by the following means and must have approval of the Office of the Diaconate (*Directory* 256).

**QUALIFYING PROGRAMS/ACCEPTABILITY OF CEU CREDITS**

Continuing Education Programs shall include:

- Workshops 1 CEU for each contact hour

- Institutes 1 CEU for each contact hour
- Weekday/weeknight/weekend courses 1 CEU for each contact hour and/or presentations
- College courses As determined by the presenting institution
- University courses As determined by the presenting institution
- Clergy study days 1 CEU for each contact hour
- Adult enrichment courses 1 CEU for each contact hour
- Directed reading, video and/or audio 1 CEU for each contact hour study program (advance approval required)
- Diocesan study program (may be 1 CEU for each contact hour sponsored by another diocese)
- Unique presentations given by the 1 CEU for each contact hour permanent deacon to study groups, parish programs, diocesan programs, etc. (advance approval required)

d. Evaluation and approval of all continuing education credits and courses shall be the responsibility of the Office of the Diaconate.

e. The Office of the Diaconate will periodically provide information on available courses and spiritual growth programs and will encourage deacons to attend.

f. The funding for the continuing education of the permanent deacon is the responsibility of the parish to which that deacon is assigned. Most parishes have an established monetary amount that is designated for continuing education of staff and other personnel. **The amount of funding and the reimbursement method will be established through dialogue between the deacon and his pastor.** If funding from the parish cannot be completely attained, then the Director of the Diaconate should be notified. These expenses may be reimbursed at 50% of the amount. Individual decisions will be made in each case. Expenses to be reimbursed will only be related to registration fees, travel and housing. In the case of hardship, expenses may be considered by the diocese for payment. If a deacon's primary assignment is not parish-based, his ministry supervisor is encouraged to provide financial support for his ongoing education.

g. Deacons' wives are also encouraged to deepen their Catholic faith through ongoing formation and continuing education. Pastors and ministry supervisors are encouraged to support their continuing education if possible.

h. A Continuing Education Report will be sent to all permanent deacons with their *Annual Evaluation* form (see Appendix 7.6) so that they may report their CEU's for the period of January 1 to December 31 for that year. These reports will be maintained in the file of each deacon that has faculties in the diocese and will become part of his permanent record. Failure to return the reports and/or failure to attain the minimum of 36 hours of CEU will necessitate correspondence from the deacon as to the reasons for not being in compliance with this policy. If it is determined by the Director of the Diaconate that there is insufficient reason for not having attained the required CEU's, then the deacon's file will be submitted

to the bishop.

i. The record of each permanent deacon's CEU's will be maintained at the Office of the Diaconate. The Continuing Education Report will be maintained in his personnel file. If a deacon wishes to review his continuing education file, a time should be prearranged with the Director of the Diaconate for such a review.

j. Permanent deacons must strive for personal holiness befitting their ministry. If married, the family experience provides many opportunities for growth in personal and communal spirituality. While finding active ministry a source of holiness in itself, the deacon shall allot time for reflective activities which foster growth in holiness. These activities should include, but not be limited to, spiritual reading, days of recollection, spiritual direction and retreats.

The Code of Canon Law states that clerics —are also bound to make a retreat according to the prescriptions of particular lawl (*Canon 276*). With this in mind, the Bishop of Phoenix requires that the permanent deacon shall make an annual retreat, of at least three (3) days, to enhance his spiritual growth and development. It is suggested that, if married, the deacon's wife also make an annual retreat. The Office of the Diaconate will provide more than one opportunity for these retreats. If a deacon desires to fulfill this obligation by attending a retreat other than a Diocesan sponsored one, it must be approved by the Director of the Diaconate.

The annual retreat is not to be considered as fulfilling any of the CEU requirements for the permanent deacon, but it is to be reported on the Continuing Education Report that is submitted each year.