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**Diocesan Diaconal Formation Program:
Academic Year Begins Soon
for New and Returning Students**

The Diaconal Formation Program is conducted in collaboration between the diocese and Saint Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary (South Canaan PA). All classes and instruction take place at the Endicott Campus located at Saints Peter and Paul Church, Endicott NY. There is also a program available through the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania conducted at the Philadelphia PA campus of Saint Stephen's Cathedral, for those living in closer proximity to that location.



Interested students should speak with their parish rector; rectors should invite and encourage qualified prospective candidates. The support and recommendation of the rector for admittance into the Diaconal Formation Program is required for all applicants.

Application materials are available at:

stots.edu/application_materials.html

The completed application must be submitted to the diocesan program coordinator listed below (and not sent directly to the Seminary). For further information, please contact:

Father Alexey Karlgut
Endicott Campus
Saints Peter and Paul Church, Endicott NY
607-759-1833 ayk0@yahoo.com

Father Victor Gorodenchuck
Philadelphia Campus
Saint Stephen's Cathedral, Philadelphia PA
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The program has been created and designed specifically for the education, training, and instruction of candidates endorsed by parish rectors for potential ordination to the Holy Diaconate for ministry in the local (home) parish of origin. Students completing the two-year program and course of study will be awarded a "Certificate in Diaconal Formation" with transferable academic credit should the individual decide to enter as a full-time student at Saint Tikhon's Seminary.

The diocesan diaconal formation programs are open to men who are seeking possible ordination to the Holy Diaconate of the Orthodox Church. While all students completing the program will have met certain requisites for ordination to the diaconate, it must be noted that this program does not guarantee anyone's ordination; many other factors and considerations are involved. All students will be advised and counseled accordingly.

The course of instruction consists of two years of classes offered on Saturdays during the academic year, allowing students to take seminary-level classes while continuing with their jobs or other responsibilities. In addition to class participation, students also participate in the Divine Services and *liturgical practica*. The courses of the Certificate in Diaconal Formation Program consist of 24 academic credits that may, upon successful matriculation, be subsequently transferred towards the completion of a Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree at Saint Tikhon's Seminary. A Certificate in Diaconal Formation is awarded at the Seminary Graduation ceremony upon successful completion of the program.

Revitalization of the diaconate in terms of *diaconia* (service) and *martyria* (witness) is the chief goal and raison d'être for His Grace in establishing the program. The diaconate as we see it today in this country is far from its traditional expression throughout the history of the church. Presently the diaconate, except for small instances in this country, has been reduced to liturgical service and no more. The traditional role of deacons serving those in need has virtually disappeared and it is Bishop Michael's intention to restore the fullness of the diaconate to its historical service and witness, both in and beyond the altar. Of course, there is emphasis on liturgical practice and serving. *"Liturgical practicum is so important in diaconal formation,"* said Bishop Michael, *"men need to know, by experience, the divine services before they can love them ... and to be a good deacon means you have to love the Liturgy, you have to love Vespers and Matins or Vigil. You can't love something you don't know ... and, again, you can't learn to love from a textbook or on-line."* So too, the formation of men to be truly functioning deacons of the Church implies a ministry of service and witness beyond serving at liturgical services.



As His Grace puts it, *"The need for personal formation in ordained ministry is articulated for us beautifully by Saint Gregory the Theologian: 'A man himself must be cleansed, before cleansing others; himself be knowledgeable, that he may teach others; become light, and then give light; draw near to God, and so bring others near; be hallowed, in order to be able to make them holy; be possessed of leadership in order to lead others by the hand; possess wisdom in order to give advice.'* (Oration 2,71) *His words form the inspiration for this program."*

Of the three major orders of clergy ~ diaconate/deacons, presbyterate/priests, episcopate/bishops ~ the diaconate was established first. In the Acts of the Holy Apostles (Chapter 6) we read that seven men were selected to assist with the charitable work of the Christian community. Ideally, every parish should have at least one deacon. It is the restoration of this particular aspect of the diaconate that Bishop Michael wishes to effect.

