

History and Theology of the Diaconate

Year Two - Middler Deacons

Instructor: The Rev. Gregory J. Buffone, Ph.D.

Description of Course

Part 1. Examination of the origin of ordered ministry in the church using Biblical and extra-Biblical sources to provide background for the role and function of a deacon during the first century; use of *diakon*- in the NT is also reviewed.

Part 2. Historical documents from the first and second century are used to highlight the evolution of the office of deacon from the 2nd through the 4th century. A high-level overview of salient events relevant to the diaconate is provided up through the 20th century is also provided.

Part 3. Fundamental questions of why the diaconate is properly an ordained ministry and the sacramental theology that underpins the diaconal identity are reviewed. The distinction between offices in the church and lay ecclesial ministers is also considered.

Part 4. A brief review of the role of the deacon in church liturgy is provided.

Class Objectives

At the end of these sessions, the students should:

1. Gain an understanding of the evolution of the diaconal office from the 1st century until contemporary times
2. Appreciate why the role of deacon is properly an ordained order
3. Understand the distinction of the office of deacon relative to priest and bishop, as well as lay ecclesial ministers
4. Acquire a general understanding of the role of the deacon in primary liturgies of the church