

CONFIDENTIAL

Diocese of Elphin

PARISH PRIEST'S REFERENCE FORM
FOR APPLICANTS FOR THE PERMANENT
DIACONATE

Applicant:

Name of Priest:

Address:

.....

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Phone.....

Applicant's surname:

Christian names:

Date of birth:

The above named has applied to be accepted as a candidate for the permanent diaconate. Would you please supply the following information and assessment of the applicant.

If you need to use extra pages please quote the number of the question you are answering. Thank you for your assistance in this matter. Please note that the applicant may ask to see what has been written about him.

Priest's name:

Parish address:

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.....

.....

1. How long have you known the applicant?

2. How often does he attend Mass in your parish?

3. In what ways is he involved in the liturgical life of the parish?

4. In what ways is he involved in apostolic or other works in the parish?

5. What evidence is there of the applicant's prayer life?

6. If married, how well do you know his wife?

7. Is the marriage stable?

8. What is his wife's attitude to his desire to be a permanent deacon?

9. How well do you know his children (if any)?

10. What is their attitude to his desire to be a permanent deacon?

11. If unmarried, to what extent does he show an understanding of and commitment to celibacy?

12. Would he be acceptable to the parish community as a permanent deacon?

13. What is your attitude to the permanent diaconate?

14. What role would you envisage the applicant fulfilling in the parish as a permanent deacon?

15. What reasons does he give for wishing to be a permanent deacon?

16. How long has he felt called to the permanent diaconate?

17. Has he been consistent in wishing to be a permanent deacon since then?

18. Has he shown his desire to be a permanent deacon by any practical signs of commitment?

19. Is he honest and a man of integrity?

20. Does the applicant have good listening skills, compassion and a genuine care for and respect for other people? How is this demonstrated?

21. How does he relate to others (young people as well as old, women as well as men, individuals as well as groups)?

22. What value would you place on his maturity of judgment?

23. Does he respect the opinions of others, learn from his mistakes and take correction in a mature way?

24. How open do you feel he is to new ideas and opportunities?

25. How emotionally stable do you consider him to be? How well does he handle personal relationships?

26. To the best of your knowledge, does the applicant have any contact with vulnerable persons, especially children? If so, have you any reservations about him in this regard?

27. Are you aware of him being in any serious trouble at all or having had any serious allegations made against him?

28. Please describe any other personal qualities which indicate his suitability.

29. Are there any aspects of his personality or background which give you cause for concern?

30. In your opinion, would he be capable of undertaking the necessary academic studies? Please indicate any areas that could be developed in his formation.

32. Finally, as Parish Priest, do you give your wholehearted support to this application? Please explain your reasons and include any other observations you think relevant.

Signed:

Date:

Diocese of Elphin

Reference Form for Applicants for the Permanent Diaconate

Notes for Referees

As part of our selection procedures for applicants for the permanent diaconate, we need references from a number of people who know the applicant well. Your name has been given to us by the applicant as a referee and we welcome your help in writing as full and frank a reference as you can.

What you write will, of course, be treated in confidence; however, please note that an applicant may request to see what has been written about him.

We realise that you may not have personal knowledge of all of the aspects we mention, but we will be approaching other referees to help us build up as full a picture as possible. We are also aware that, in the case of younger applicants, it is often a case of assessing potential, rather than fully developed and proven qualities. The following notes about the life of a permanent deacon might help you to comment appropriately.

The permanent diaconate is a life-long commitment and usually requires three years of part-time formation. Once ordained, the permanent deacon will work in his home parish or deanery or in another area of ministry as the diocesan bishop sees fit. This will require flexibility on the part of the permanent deacon.

Faith

The permanent diaconate needs people of a firm yet developing faith that is practised in everyday matters as well as in regular prayer and worship. Applicants should know what their faith means to them and should be able to share it with others, including those with very different views. Firmness of faith however, does not mean rigidity; nor does it mean never questioning or examining one's faith. Applicants should live out their religious beliefs in their daily lives and should hold values that reflect the faith they profess.

Care of others

Much diaconal work is concerned with the pastoral care of individuals in personal distress or difficulty. This requires a degree of sensitivity and care, as well as the ability to listen and to keep a sense of proportion. In this and other areas, it is important that the deacon has a good sense of judgement and is able to reach decisions in a mature way. He should also be tactful and must be able to keep confidences in a professional manner. In other daily aspects of work, he will be required to relate to individuals and groups of different ages, outlooks and abilities in a variety of circumstances; he should therefore be an approachable person and be able to communicate effectively. If he shows marked signs of being impatient, over-critical, very nervous, judgmental or easily offended, his effectiveness may be impaired.

A permanent deacon will spend time working with vulnerable persons, at times in an unsupervised capacity. It is of crucial importance that he be entirely trustworthy in this. If you have any doubts regarding his suitability in this matter, please indicate this.

Working with Others

Permanent deacons need to work well with other people. They will almost always be part of a team, working closely with a parish priest and any other assistants he may have.

Leadership

Permanent deacons must be good leaders. They need to have the ability to help others develop their gifts and be able to lead by word and example. They will be required to exercise authority wisely and to respond in a mature way to the authority of others, particularly of the parish priests with whom they will be working most closely.

Coping with change

Permanent diaconate calls for flexibility in attitudes of mind and an openness to respond generously to change and the pressures that ministry brings. At the same time however, due to the life-long commitment involved in being a permanent deacon, the applicant should be a person of stable character and temperament.

Health

Although the applicant will be required to undergo a medical examination, please indicate any medical conditions of his of which you are aware. Please indicate if, so far as you are aware, he suffers from any kind of substance dependency.

Personal Relationships

Personal relationships are involved in all aspects of diaconal ministry. Maturity in this area is very important. If you know of any problems in the applicant's personality or difficulties in his personal or family relationships, it would be helpful if you mention them. You might also wish to comment on how others, including family, have responded to his application.

Training

Those training for the permanent diaconate must be open to personal, spiritual, pastoral and academic formation. They need to be adaptable, flexible and open to continuing formation throughout life. The course involves academic work and spiritual formation.

Questions

If you feel unable to comment on particular aspects of the questionnaire, possibly because you are unfamiliar with the permanent diaconate, please indicate this if you wish. Also, if you require clarification or further information regarding any of the questions, or wish to discuss your reference in confidence, please contact the Elphin Diocesan Director for the permanent diaconate (address and telephone number enclosed).