

## ***Admission to Candidacy for the Diaconate***

On Sunday, December 6, 2009, at St. James Cathedral, **Theman Pham** of our parish will be admitted to candidacy for the permanent diaconate. Having completed an initial inquiry period and year of aspirancy, twenty-five men will participate in the rite of candidacy. In this rite, those seeking ordination as deacons show publicly their willingness to offer themselves to God and the Church for service as deacons. The Church accepts their offering, calls them to prepare for ordination, and recognizes them as candidates for the permanent diaconate. They now embark on a three-year preparation program that includes spiritual formation, pastoral formation and intellectual formation.

### **Who is a Deacon?**

A deacon is an ordained minister of the Catholic Church. There are three groups, or "orders," of ordained ministers in the Church: bishops, presbyters (priests) and deacons. Deacons are ordained as a sacramental sign to the Church and to the world of Christ, who came "to serve and not to be served." The entire Church is called by Christ to serve, and the deacon, in virtue of his sacramental ordination and through his various ministries, is to be a servant in a servant-Church.

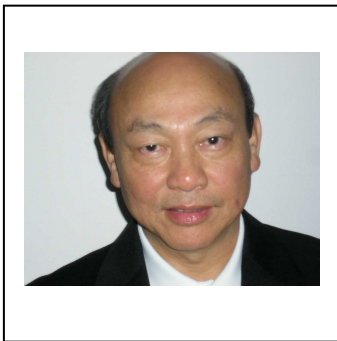
The Second Vatican Council (1962 – 1965) authorized the restoration of the diaconate as a PERMANENT order of ministry. There were approximately 28,238 permanent deacons serving in 135 countries. There are more than 13,000 deacons in the United States alone who minister in this Order permanently.

***"At the direction of the Second Vatican Council, the Permanent Diaconate has been restored as a vital ministry in assisting us bishops in the mission of the Church. By Sacred Ordination and their exercise of 'the ministry of the liturgy, of the word, and of charity,' deacons have a special relationship to us in fulfilling our responsibilities of bringing the knowledge and genuine comfort of Christ to the People of God."***

**Bishop Wilton Gregory,  
Presidential Address, 11  
November 2002**

### **What are these "various ministries" of the Deacon?**

All ordained ministers in the Church are called to functions of Word, Sacrament, and Charity, but bishops, presbyters and deacons exercise these functions in various ways. As ministers of Word, deacons proclaim the Gospel, preach, and teach in the name of the Church. As ministers of Sacrament, deacons baptize, lead the faithful in prayer, witness marriages, and conduct wake and funeral services. As ministers of Charity, deacons are leaders in identifying the needs of others, then marshalling the Church's resources to meet those needs. Deacons are also dedicated to eliminating the injustices or inequities that cause such needs. The deacon is the bridge between the Church and



the world. He brings the needs of the poor to the attention of the Church; he brings to the poor the care and concern of the People of God. This ministry of Charity is the foundation for the deacon's ministry of Word and Sacrament.

But no matter what specific functions a deacon performs, they flow from his sacramental identity. The deacon in a special manner is to represent and encourage the specifically diaconal dimension of all Church ministry patterned after the servant ministry of Jesus.

### **Is a Deacon ordained for the Parish or the Diocese?**

Whenever a person is ordained, he is to serve the diocesan Church. Deacons are no different in this regard: they are assigned by the bishop to ministries for which the bishop perceives a great need, and for which the deacon may have special gifts or talents. Most often, this will be within a parish setting, just as most priests serve in a parish.

### **What can the Parish Do?**

A deacon's vocation is fostered in a faith community that is diaconal, that is, one dedicated to service. Your commitment to ministry and charitable deeds offers the environment to nurture and form the deacon. Your own prayer and encouragement is also very valuable. A candidate's pastoral formation often takes place in his parish. It is there that the candidate will develop the practical skills necessary to be successful in ministry. Your pastor or parish life coordinator may call upon you to offer constructive feedback to the candidate. The pastor is usually the supervisor for the pastoral placement of a candidate. This is a time consuming responsibility. Thank you for making it possible for your pastor to give the time necessary to assist in the formation of the deacon candidate from your parish.

For more information and the ministry and formation of deacons go to:  
<http://www.seattlearch.org/Vocations/Deacons/>