

Diaconate Exam – Study Guide

The candidate is to be examined on his knowledge of the nature and role of the Deacon in the Roman Catholic Church, and on his ability to explain how that knowledge may be employed in pastoral situations. The successful candidate will:

- a) communicate simply, accurately, and effectively the theological tradition of the Roman Catholic Church [DSPT MDiv Outcome 1];*
- b) analyze and assess ministerial/apostolic situations through scriptural, historical, and systematic theological approaches, according to the theological tradition of the Roman Catholic Church [DSPT MDiv Outcome 3];*
- c) articulate clearly how he will fulfill his responsibilities with the moral, intellectual, psychological, and emotional maturity that grounds vigorous discipleship of Christ and diaconal service to others [DSPT MDiv Outcome 4];*
- d) understand the role of the deacon in leading a faith community in prayer, worship and theological reflection, centered on the Eucharist, respecting both the liturgical tradition of the Church and the pastoral needs of the local community [DSPT MDiv Outcome 5];*
- e) apply the principles of Catholic and Thomistic theology (including systematic, moral, spiritual, canonical, and pastoral principles) to ministerial/apostolic situations [DSPT MDiv Outcome 6];*
- f) articulate clearly the role of the deacon in both leading and working collaboratively with others in a just, charitable, and generous manner, respecting the relevant cultural, social, and ecclesial circumstances, all the while maintaining professional, ethical boundaries [DSPT MDiv Outcome 7].*

The candidate's responses are to be doctrinally sound and pastorally focused, reflecting moral, intellectual, psychological, and emotional maturity.

1. The Order of Deacon

- What is the relationship between Holy Orders and the common priesthood of all believers?
- What distinguishes the diaconate from the priesthood and the episcopate?
- What are the specific duties/ministries of a deacon? Can these can also be performed by a lay person? What kinds of blessings can deacons give?
- Why is ordination reserved to males alone? What is the relation of celibacy to ordination?

2. Baptism

- Explain the ritual and rubrics for Baptism.
- What are the effects of the sacrament of Baptism? How is someone who has not been baptized made a partaker in the gift of salvation offered in the sacraments of the church? (See *Lumen Gentium*, chapter 1; *Gaudium et Spes*, chapter 1)
- What is required for the valid administration of Baptism?
- What are the circumstances under which you might refuse to allow an adult to enter the Catholic Church?
- Are there any circumstances under which you might refuse to baptize a child whose parents are Catholic? How would you explain such a decision pastorally to the parents?

- What is meant by conditional baptism? Give an example of when one might baptize conditionally.

3. Eucharist

- In what ways is the Eucharist both a meal and a sacrifice?
- What is meant by transubstantiation?
- What is the role of the deacon in the celebration of the Eucharist? (See the *General Instruction on the Roman Missal*.)
- What is the ritual for Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction?

4. Matrimony

- Explain the ritual and rubrics for Matrimony.
- Explain the theology of Matrimony. Who is the minister of this sacrament? What is required for a valid marriage? What is the minimum age?
- What is meant by the expression *delegation to witness a marriage*, and from whom does one obtain this delegation?
- Summarize the steps involved in the preparation for marriage for this sacrament (from initial interview, paperwork, documents, and preparation of the couple to the exchange of vows).
- Explain the kinds of authorization needed for mixed religion and disparity of cult. Can you ever perform a marriage without such dispensations?
- What is meant by convalidation?

5. Pastoral care of the sick

- What is the Christian understanding of suffering and death?
- What is the deacon's role in the pastoral care of the sick? What is the ritual for bringing Communion to the sick?
- Why is a deacon not permitted to administer the sacrament of the anointing of the sick?

6. Christian Burial

- What is the deacon's role in the Rite of Christian burial?
- What would you say to someone asks for services for a deceased family member who is not a Catholic?
- What is the Church's position regarding the practice of cremation? How would you deal pastorally with those who would like their loved one's remains cremated and scattered?