



## INSTITUTE FOR DIACONAL STUDIES ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

### Integrating Seminars

AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE LEARNING PROCESS is the ability to revisit key areas of theological study with all of its integral components. Through the use of integrating seminars at the end of each formation year, aspirants and candidates will have the opportunity to raise questions anew and refresh and update their theological knowledge on all aspects of study during the year. Though the intellectual dimension is key, the integration of the human, spiritual and pastoral dimensions of formation in relation to select theological study is crucial.

The integrating seminar at the conclusion of aspirancy will help solidify a spiritual foundation as well as introduce foundational elements in diaconal spirituality, evangelization, early Church spirituality and monastic spirituality and mysticism. Hands-on (experiential) study review includes leading public prayer, and an introduction to Lectio Divina and the Liturgy of the Hours.

The integrating seminars during candidacy prepare candidates for comprehensive assessments regarding their academic formation.

**From the National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States:**

225. A comprehensive and integrative seminar, such as those used in professional education, is recommended as a model to determine the level of assimilation and achievement of the candidate at the completion of his theological course of study. This model fulfills the requirement of a comprehensive review as required by the *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons*.<sup>22</sup> The faculty facilitators of the seminar evaluate how effectively the individual candidate is “able to explain his faith and bring to maturity a lively ecclesial conscience,”<sup>23</sup> how he has acquired “the capacity to read a situation and an adequate inculturation of the Gospel,”<sup>24</sup> and how successfully he has used “communication techniques and group dynamics, the ability to speak in public, and [the ability] to give guidance and counsel.”<sup>25</sup> In such seminars, typically formatted around case studies of a pastoral nature, the candidate has an opportunity to explore pastoral solutions in the presence of his peers, formation faculty, and pastoral supervisors. In the seminar, he is called upon not only to demonstrate an intellectual understanding of theology, but also its application in pastoral practice. He gives and receives feedback, thus demonstrating his competency in such areas as communication and his ability to work constructively within a group. In addition, his pastoral world view is exposed and assessed and his “pastoral intuition” is honored and challenged. The goal of this comprehensive and integrative seminar is always to project how the candidate will live a diaconal lifestyle and ministry.

