



## INSTITUTE FOR DIACONAL STUDIES ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

### Ministry of the Word

#### V. The Church's Ministry of the Word: The Deacon as Evangelizer and Teacher

31. The deacon participates as an evangelizer and teacher in the Church's mission of heralding the word. In the liturgy of the word, especially in the Eucharist or in those liturgies where he is the presiding minister, the deacon proclaims the Gospel. He may preach by virtue of ordination and in accord with the requirements of Canon Law.<sup>28</sup> Other forms of the deacon's participation in the Church's ministry of the word include catechetical instruction; religious formation of candidates and families preparing for the reception of the sacraments; leadership roles in retreats, evangelization, and renewal programs; outreach to alienated Catholics; and counseling and spiritual direction, to the extent that he is properly trained.<sup>29</sup> The deacon also strives to "transmit the word in [his] professional [life] either explicitly or merely by [his] active presence in places where public opinion is formed and ethical norms are applied."<sup>30</sup> In these and many other formal and informal ways, the deacon leads the community to reflect on their communion and mission in Jesus Christ, especially impelling the community of believers to live lives of service. Because the deacon sacramentalizes service, he should proclaim the word in such a way that he first witnesses its empowerment in his own life. Then he can effectively challenge others to practice the Church's ministry of charity and justice in the social environments in which people live their baptismal vocation. By his own faithful practice of the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, the deacon "by word and example . . . should work so that all the faithful, in imitation of Christ, may place themselves at the constant service of their brothers and sisters."<sup>31</sup>

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

