



INSTITUTE FOR DIACONAL STUDIES ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

Theological Reflection Groups

ALL ASPIRANTS, CANDIDATES AND WIVES ARE ASSIGNED TO A SMALL GROUP known as Theological Reflection Group” during the one-year Aspirancy path and the three years of candidacy. These are **KEY EVENTS** (expectation of attendance by all wives). Experience has taught that these small groups are a highlight of the formation experience.

The Theological Reflection Group has an ordained deacon and his wife as appointed mentors; and participants meet in the mentor home (or, possibly their parish). The experienced mentors help guide participants in the discernment process as well as leading individuals in proclamation techniques and the art of theological reflection. They are invaluable as sources of wisdom and counsel regarding ordained ministry and lifestyle.

The first session is scheduled in the formation/academic calendar. At this session participants meet the other aspirants/candidates and wives in their assigned group and get to know each other at the outset of the journey. All sessions are two hours in length.

- **It is imperative that everyone arrives promptly at the agreed upon start time.**

Also, at this first gathering participants will determine the dates and times of future sessions for the formation year in a collaborative way. The **INSTITUTE FOR DIACONAL STUDIES (IDS)** encourages that the Mentor Group or Theological Reflection Group meet as often as the group desires – but the expectation is a minimum of once per month during the academic calendar year (minimum of 9 times, September through May).

- **The structure of these sessions is predetermined and the group does not possess the freedom to alter the structure or format.**

During Aspirancy and the Candidacy Path the focus is on Vocation Discernment utilizing ‘Theological Reflection’, the artful practice of bringing our lives into conversation with our Christian heritage in a way that nurtures insights for us and for the tradition. On-going vocational discernment is also primary.

Included in all sessions are times for general feedback and faith-sharing, as well as hospitality at the closure of the session.

