

MINISTERING TO SENIOR & RETIRED DEACONS

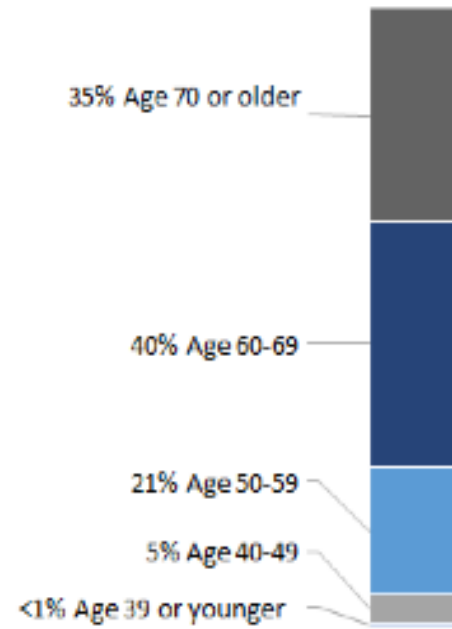
National Association of Diaconate Directors

MLI

2023

CARA (MAY 2021)

Age of Active Deacons



CARA

Three in four active permanent deacons (74%) are at least 60 years old.

CARA

More than a third (35%) are
70 or older.

CARA

Two in five active permanent deacons (40%) are 60 to 69.

CARA

A fifth of active deacons
(21%) are in their fifties.

CARA

One in twenty deacons in active ministry (5%) is in their 40s.

CARA

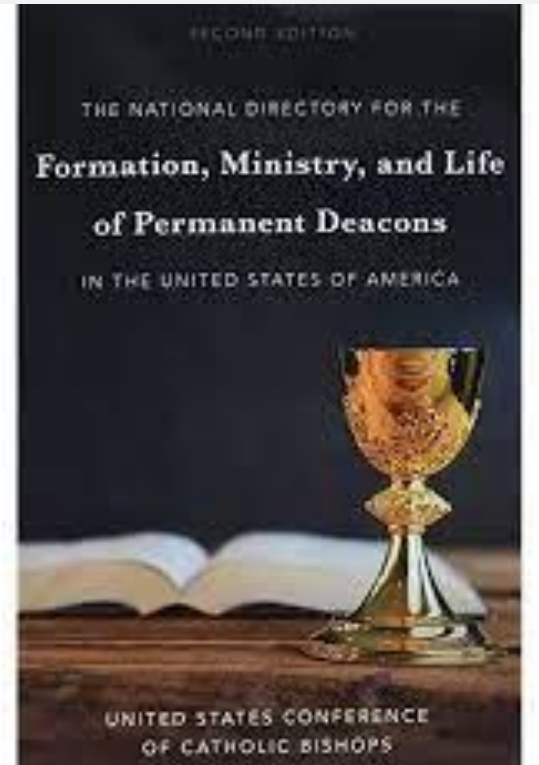
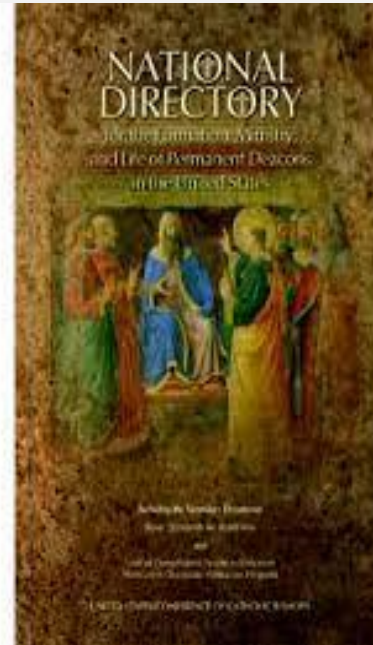
Less than 1% are under the
age of 40.

**MINISTRY TO SENIOR DEACONS
SHOULD NOT START AT SECULAR
EMPLOYMENT RETIREMENT OR
WHEN THEY REACH RETIREMENT
AGE STATUS**

MINISTRY TO SENIOR AND RETIRED
DEACONS DOES NOT START AT RETIREMENT

- Develop good life habits or lifestyles
- Get hobbies
- Plan for retirement that is well rounded

RELEVANT REFERENCES



RESIGNATION AND RETIREMENT

#103

#111

Norms should be established in each diocese regarding the age, health, and other matters that need to be considered regarding a deacon's resignation from a ministerial office or his retirement from ministerial duties.

WITHDRAWAL OF DIACONAL FACULTIES

#100

#107

Bishops are reminded that if the ministry of a permanent deacon becomes ineffective or even harmful due to some personal difficulties or irresponsible behavior, his ministerial assignment and faculties are to be withdrawn by the diocesan bishop in accord with Canon Law.

SUPPORT OF THE CLERGY

#94

#298, 303, 304

Permanent deacons are to take care of their own and their family's needs using income derived from their full-time employment by the diocese, parish, or secular profession. In an individual situation of need, the diocesan Church ought to assist the deacon and his family in charity.

RIGHTS AND DUTIES

#45

The diocesan bishop also ensures that the “rights and duties as foreseen by canons 273-283 of the *Code of Canon Law* with regard to clerics in general and deacons in particular” are promoted.

***CELIBACY AFFECTS EVERY
DEACON***

#72

In one way or another, celibacy affects every deacon, married or unmarried. Understanding the nature of celibacy—its value and its practice—are essential to the married deacon. Not only does this understanding strengthen and nurture his own commitment to marital chastity, but it also helps to prepare him for the possibility of living celibate chastity should his wife predecease him. This concern is particularly unique within the diaconate. Tragically, some deacons who were married at the time of ordination only begin to face the issues involved with celibacy upon the death of their wives. As difficult as this process is, all deacons need to appreciate the impact celibacy can have on their lives and ministry.

THE WIDOWED DEACON

#73

#79

The death of a married deacon's wife is a "particular moment in life which calls for faith and Christian hope." The death of the wife of a married deacon introduces a new reality into the daily routine of his family and ministry. Charity should be extended to the widowed deacon as he assesses and accepts his new personal circumstances, so he will not neglect his primary duty as father to his children or any new needs his family might have. As required, a widowed deacon should be assisted to seek professional counsel and spiritual direction as he encounters and integrates the bereavement process. Further, the fraternal closeness of his bishop, the priests with whom he ministers, and the diaconal community should offer comfort and reassurance in this special moment in his life. This adjustment to a new state of life can be achieved only in time through prayer, counsel, and an "intensification of one's dedication to others for the love of God in the ministry."

MINISTRY TO A DEACON'S WIDOW

#74

#81

A similar sensitivity also should be given to the widow of a deacon since she shared so intimately in her husband's life and ministerial witness. The bishop and her pastor, as well as the diaconal and parish communities, should extend appropriate and adequate support in her bereavement. Widows of deacons ought to remain connected with the diaconal community, not only because of support and encouragement, but because of the unique bonds that had been forged by virtue of her husband's ordination.

CHANGES IN LIFE STATUS

Most senior & retired deacons have more time availability due to leaving their secular employment

Most senior & retired deacons are still very involved in ministry

Change can be difficult
Help identify their mission.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATI ONS IN THIS MINISTRY

3

1. They are *still* deacons
2. They *still* have value
3. They *still* are and will always be a part of the community

START

- They may have hesitancy
- Initiate the contact
- Keep the doors open for opportunities of two-way communication.

MAJOR AREAS OF CONCERN
(THESE FALL ON A SPECTRUM)

- Physical
- Spiritual
- Emotional
- Material
- Support Network

PHYSICAL

- Are they handling their current health-care needs well (physician, dentist, other specialists) How is health impacting their daily lives?
- Are they under the care of medical experts – how are any conditions manifesting themselves
- Are they becoming the focus at the liturgy; instead of the Eucharist? Are they enhancing or detracting from the celebration?

SPIRITUAL

- Seeing their Spiritual Director
- Active in sacramental life of the church
- Praying, - especially the Liturgy of the Hours

When problems exist/arise most have stopped

Praying is a ministry in itself

EMOTIONAL

- Do they have a good support network - wife, children (close)
- Other support networks – deacons, classmates, priests, parish, and extended family & friends
- Get multiple contacts and contact information
- Married? Who is taking care of who – what are the needs?

MATERIAL

- Material needs are being met – food, transportation, proper housing, insurances, bills paid
- Current Will, living will, power of attorney (medical & legal – (location and who has access)
- Funeral arrangements and liturgy plan on file (family aware?) Good for his family (primary) –for the diocese (secondary)

ASSESSING NEEDS

- In person Visits

Use your senses

- Ask those involved

Who what where when why

- **ASK** him/them what they need and how can we assist!

PERSONNEL (1/2)

- Not about the minister or the role – but about the other
- Someone they know and trust - accessibility
- Knows how to approach others - They usually won't discuss easily – probe with sensitivity
- Compassion, respectful
- Similar life experiences, - **peer**? They can relate to this person


PERSONNEL (2/2)

- Not checking a box for record keeping – annual letters?
- A combined effort by many
- Knowledgeable - One stop shopping
- Follow through

ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNICATION

- Telephone – home or cell
- USPS - Paper – newsletters, memos, memorandums (frequency)
- Email
- Visits
- Social media
- **Ask them!**

The image features two tags on a light blue background. The top tag is orange with a white rectangular label in the center containing the word 'WANTS' in black, uppercase, sans-serif font. A white ribbon is attached to the left side of this tag. The bottom tag is dark brown with a white rectangular label in the center containing the word 'NEEDS' in black, uppercase, sans-serif font. A white ribbon is attached to the right side of this tag.

WANTS

NEEDS

RETIREMENT FROM MINISTRY

Voluntary vs. Non-Voluntary

Acknowledge & Celebrate their ministry

Bulletin announcements

Mass

Party/celebration

VOLUNTAR_Y

- Help identify ministry going forward
- Moving? (new diocese)
 - Closer to family
 - Snow-birds

NON- VOLUNTARY

WILLING

Give them permission to decrease/retire/change ministry – is their new ministry a “ministry of prayer”

NOT SO WILLING

1. Get others involved

Pastor – Family – Friends –
Classmates

2. NEXT STEPS

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- The Pastor
- The Staff
- Benefits; Continuing EDU, faculties
- Their spouse:
 - “For better and for worse; but not for 24/7”

QUESTIONS - DISCUSSION