

Diocese of Venice in Florida  
Guidelines for Continuing Education  
For  
Permanent Deacons including those in Service Ministry

**INTRODUCTION:** Deacons, as professionals in ministry, need to constantly update themselves with practical education to acquire confidence and adequacy in their ministry, and to demonstrate to the Church they serve that they are capable ministers of the Word and Sacrament.

Therefore, all Deacons given faculties to function or granted privileges for Service Ministry within the Diocese of Venice in Florida are to successfully complete a minimum of eighteen (18) Continuing Education Units (CEU's) each year.

This program is based on the assumption that continuing formation/education is essential for the growth of the Permanent Deacon. Not only does it enhance ministerial competency, but it also aids in personal development. The goals for each Deacon will obviously be different and because we are all unique individuals with different gifts and different ministries. Each Deacon will need to evaluate the past year's activities and to discard those activities that do not meet their needs and should enhance those that do. The questions that should be asked are:

- Have I built a closer relationship with the Lord this year?
- Have I enhanced my ministry and interpersonal relationships?
- Am I a better person?

**POLICY:** In order to promote and encourage the deacon's own journey in faith, it is the policy of the Diocese that all permanent deacons given faculties to minister or extended Service Ministry privileges within the Diocese must complete a minimum of eighteen (18) CEU's each year. Only the Director of Diaconate Personnel can give a waiver of these requirements.

**GENERAL CRITERIA:** To insure that these educational requirements are achieved, certain criteria have been established to assist each deacon in determining the number of CEU's achieved through various kinds of continuing education:

A. The scope and nature of instruction should pertain to preparation for the deacon's ministry to the Church in areas of liturgy, word, and charity. This would include background for updating of current ministry, or preparation for a future ministry. Also, other courses that help deacons in ministry or prepare them to better serve the people of God should be included.

B. Credit may be recorded in whole or in part using the following guidelines:

1. Continuing Education Courses may include:

- Certificate courses. Many national / regional and local courses issue a certificate at the end of an instructional seminar or conference. All credit units shown on the certificates may be credited as CEU's.
- College courses may also be included. Because of the wide variety of methods used in college credit systems, it is not possible to convert college credits to CEU's. Instead, one hour of

classroom time can be considered to equal one CEU credit up to a maximum of 6 credit units for each course.

- Adult Enrichment courses at parishes or local high school programs will count one.
- Correspondence courses will also receive CEU credit for each classroom or lecture hour attended.

You must eliminate all non-academic activities such as social periods, lunch, coffee breaks, etc., before recording the credit units.

SPECIAL NOTES: Extra units may not be carried over to the following year; i.e., if more than 18 units are earned in a given year, they may not be used to satisfy the requirements for the following years. This requirement for continuing education will not apply to any Permanent Deacon who is on approved leave of absence.

2. Retreats: Retreats are primarily for the spiritual growth of the deacon. A deacon is required by Canon Law to make an annual retreat. A deacon must attain a minimum of 5 CEU's each year through a retreat. The annual Diocese of Venice Deacon Retreat will normally account for 5 CEU's. If unable to attend the annual retreat, a deacon may attend other retreats, with CEU's computed on the basis of 2 CEU's per day and a half (1/2) CEU per half (1/2) day. No more than ten 10 CEU's may be credited for retreats in any one-year.

3. Days of Reflection: Attendance will be credited at one 1 CEU per day.

4. Self-Study: Individual study such as reading professional books and periodicals, listening to educational tapes, and viewing educational videocassettes or DVD's. One CEU may be counted for every fifty (50) pages read or each hour of listening or viewing. No more than 5 CEU's may be earned from self-study projects without prior approval from the Director of Diaconate Personnel.

Days of Education presented in the Diocese will be credited three 3 CEU's.

5. Deacon Meetings: Two (2) CEU's will be granted for each general meeting attended. It must be noted that each Deacon is required to attend these meetings.

C. The following activities are normally not creditable:

1. Travel time to and from all classes or activities.
2. Informal meetings and conferences.
3. Prayer Services and Liturgies.
4. Spiritual direction sessions.
5. Parish Council and committee meetings.
6. Social gatherings.
7. Diocesan Boards and Committee meetings.
8. Administration and business meetings.
9. Support group functions.
10. Courses not related to ministerial service or spirituality.

D. While it is not necessary to submit more than 18 CEU's, deacons are encouraged to submit all their continuing education activities in order that their personal files are complete and up to date.

#### Summary of Credit Calculation

Activity	Credit hours earned	Maximum allowable credit
Continuing Education Courses with Certificate Granted	Per certificate granted	20 CEU's
Continuing Education Course with no Certificate Granted	1 CEU credit per 1-hour classroom time	6 CEU's per course taken
Retreats - Diocese of Venice	Diocese of Venice Deacon Retreat = 5 CEU's	10 retreat CEU's per year
Retreats - Other	2 CEU's per day and 1 CEU per half-day	10 retreat CEU per year
Days of Reflection	1 CEU per day	5 CEU's
Self-Study - Books, Audio classes or Video classes	1 CEU per 50 pages read or 1 CEU per hour listened to or watched	5 CEU's
Deacon Meetings - Diocese of Venice	2 CEU's per each general meeting	None

#### REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. Each Permanent Deacon will maintain his own record using the form provided.
2. Deacons are required to submit a copy of their form on or before March 31 of each year with the total CEU's recorded to the Office of the Permanent Diaconate.
3. Each Deacon should retain a copy of the original form. The submitted copy will become part of the Deacon's official personnel file.
4. The deacon will have access to his continuing education file upon verbal request to the Director of Diaconate Personnel.
5. The Director of Diaconate Personnel will verify compliance, follow-up as necessary, and file the copies submitted.

**COMPLIANCE FAILURE:** Failure to meet the continuing education requirements of 18 CEU's will be reviewed by the Bishop. The Bishop will determine the corrective action to be taken as appropriate.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** The deacon is called to minister to the People of God in the name of the pilgrim Church under the leadership of the Bishop. With the explosion of information and the constantly accelerating rate of change that are the hallmarks of our time, continuing education is essential for effective ministry. The Gospel call to service and the tenor of the time demands it.

If a deacon fails, without sufficient reason, to participate adequately, i.e. in at least 60% of the required programs, the Director of Diaconate Personnel (or his designee) will personally discuss

with the deacon the reasons for his lack of participation. The Director may schedule a meeting with the Bishop to discuss the matter further. After such a meeting, the deacon's failure to participate may result in loss of faculties and stipulation of the conditions under which the faculties may be renewed.

**WAIVER OR EXTENSION OF REQUIREMENT:** Waiver of the 18 CEU's per year may be granted in exceptional cases. Extension of time may be given to complete the educational requirements on a case by case basis. Either of these exceptions requires prior approval the Director of Diaconate Personnel and may be considered upon a receipt of a written request from the deacon. The waiver may be considered for, but is not limited to, age, health, employment, family, or ministry demands. Upon approval or rejection of the request the Director of Diaconate Personnel will respond in writing.

Written 12.16.09  
Revised 09.22.22