

Nine permanent deacons to be ordained May 19

Cardinal William H. Keeler will ordain nine permanent deacons for the Archdiocese of Baltimore May 19 in a 10 a.m. ceremony at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen, Homeland.

The men completed four years of extensive study and were required to take courses in theology, leadership and spirituality with the Church Leadership Institute, followed by internships, coursework, retreats and a host of other activities preparing for formation.

Deacons serve in hospitals, prisons and parishes in a variety of capacities. Professional experiences the nine new deacons bring to the archdiocese include careers as college faculty members, businessmen, a health care provider, an engineer, an attorney and a fire safety specialist.

"Deacons can baptize and witness marriages," said Father Patrick M. Carrion, director of deacon formation for the archdiocese and administrator of St. John, Westminster. "Some might oversee a social justice program, outreach to the poor or perform an education component. Each person works that out with the parish or institution they are assigned to. It's usually determined by what will be best for them and the parish."

Assignments for the graduating class of 2007 will be determined by Cardinal Keeler around the time of ordination.

A candidate is required to be a baptized man who is confirmed, a Roman Catholic for at least six years, a U.S. citizen or a legal, permanent resident with working knowledge of English, between the ages of 31 and 60 at the time of ordination, a high school graduate and financially secure. Those joining the next class can expect to be ordained in spring 2011.

Men interested in joining the diaconate program should call the Division of Clergy Personnel at 410-547-5427.