

**CONFIDENTIAL**  
Diocese of Achonry



**CHARACTER REFERENCE FORM**  
**FOR APPLICANTS FOR THE**  
**PERMANENT DIACONATE**

Applicant .....

Name of Referee .....

Address: .....

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Tel:/ Mobile: .....

E-mail: .....

1. How long, and in what capacity have you known the applicant?  
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\_\_\_\_\_

2. Are you still in regular contact? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What evidence is there, if any, of his Christian faith in his daily life?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Is he honest and a man of integrity?  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Does he have good listening skills, compassion and a genuine care and respect for other people?

\_\_\_\_\_

How is this demonstrated? \_\_\_\_\_

6. How well does he communicate with others (both individuals and groups)?

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\_\_\_\_\_

7. What value would you place on his maturity of judgment?

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\_\_\_\_\_

8. Does he respect the opinions of others, learn from mistakes and take correction in a mature way?

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\_\_\_\_\_

9. How effective is the applicant in:

- a) exercising leadership?

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

- b) responding to authority?

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- c) delegation?

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10. How open do you feel he is to new ideas and opportunities?

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11. How emotionally stable do you consider him to be? How well does he handle personal relationships? Do you feel that others would be safe in his care?

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12. Are you aware of him being in serious trouble or having had any serious accusations made against him?

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13. What are his main strengths and weaknesses?

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14. From what you know of him, do you think he understands the nature and demands of ministry? What potential does he have to make a life-long commitment to the permanent diaconate?

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15. What do you think are the applicant's motivations and intentions in applying for ministry?

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16. Have you any reservations about his suitability to work with young or vulnerable persons?

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17. Do you recommend him for consideration as a permanent deacon? Why, and with what degree of confidence? (Please give as full an opinion as you can). Also, please add anything else that you may feel relevant that has not already been mentioned.

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Signed: .....

Date: .....

**Diocese of Achonry  
Reference Form for Applicants for the Permanent Diaconate**

**Notes for Referees:**

As part of our selection procedures for applicants for the Catholic permanent diaconate, we need references from a number of people who know the applicant well. Your name has been given to us by the applicant as a referee and we welcome your help in writing as full and frank a reference as you can.

What you write will, of course, be treated in confidence; however, please note that an applicant may request to see what has been written about him.

We realise that you may not have personal knowledge of all of the aspects we mention, but we will be approaching other referees to help us build up as full a picture as possible. We are also aware that, in the case of younger applicants, it is often a case of assessing potential, rather than fully developed and proven qualities. The following notes about the life of a permanent deacon might help you to comment appropriately.

The permanent diaconate in the Catholic Church is a life-long commitment and usually requires three years of part-time formation. Once ordained, the permanent deacon will work in his home parish or deanery or in another area of ministry as his diocesan bishop sees fit. This will require flexibility on the part of the permanent deacon.

1. Faith

The permanent diaconate needs people of a firm yet developing faith that is practised in everyday matters as well as in regular prayer and worship. Applicants should know what their faith means to them and should be able to share it with others, including those with very different views. Firmness of faith however, does not mean rigidity; nor does it mean never questioning or examining one's faith. Applicants should live out their religious beliefs in their daily lives and should hold values that reflect the faith they profess.

2. Care of others

Much diaconal work is concerned with the pastoral care of individuals in personal distress or difficulty. This requires a degree of sensitivity and care, as well as the ability to listen and to keep a sense of proportion. In this and other areas, it is important that the deacon has a good sense of judgement and is able

to reach decisions in a mature way. He should also be tactful and must be able to keep confidences in a professional manner. In other daily aspects of work, he will be required to relate to individuals and groups of different ages, outlooks and abilities in a variety of circumstances; he should, therefore, be an approachable person and be able to communicate effectively. If he shows marked signs of being impatient, over-critical, very nervous, judgmental or easily offended, his effectiveness may be impaired.

A permanent deacon will spend time working with vulnerable persons, at times in an unsupervised capacity. It is of crucial importance that he be entirely trustworthy in this. If you have any doubts regarding his suitability in this matter, please indicate this.

### 3. Working with Others

Permanent deacons need to work well with other people. They will almost always be part of a team, working closely with a parish priest and any other assistants he may have.

### 4. Leadership

Permanent deacons must be good leaders. They need to have the ability to help others develop their gifts and be able to lead by word and example. They will be required to exercise authority wisely and to respond in a mature way to the authority of others, particularly of the parish priests with whom they will be working most closely.

### 5. Coping with change

Permanent diaconate calls for flexibility in attitudes of mind and an openness to respond generously to change and the pressures that ministry brings. At the same time however, due to the life-long commitment involved in being a permanent deacon, the applicant should be a person of stable character and temperament.

### 6. Health

Although the applicant will be required to undergo a medical examination, please indicate any medical conditions of his of which you are aware. Please indicate if, so far as you are aware, he suffers from any kind of substance dependency.

7. Personal Relationships

Personal relationships are involved in all aspects of diaconal ministry. Maturity in this area is very important. If you know of any problems in the applicant's personality or difficulties in his personal or family relationships, it would be helpful if you mention them. You might also wish to comment on how others, including family, have responded to his application.

8. Training

Those training for the permanent diaconate must be open to personal, spiritual, pastoral and academic formation. They need to be adaptable, flexible and open to continuing formation throughout life. The course involves academic work and spiritual formation.

9. Questions

If you feel unable to comment on particular aspects of the questionnaire, possibly because you are unfamiliar with the Catholic Church or the permanent diaconate, please indicate this if you wish. Also, if you require clarification or further information regarding any of the questions, or wish to discuss your reference in confidence, please contact the Diocesan Director of the permanent diaconate:

Rev. Dr. Tomas Surlis

St Nathy's College

Ballaghaderreen

Co. Roscommon

Telephone 094-986 0010

E-mail: [tsurlis@achonrydiocese.org](mailto:tsurlis@achonrydiocese.org)

