

## Report on Scenario

Question 4: As Archdeacon for Deacons, you have just concluded a meeting with your bishop who has moved “continuing education” to the top of his priority list. There is no practice or culture of ongoing learning in the diocese, particularly among deacons. You have been charged with motivating and organizing the deacon community to “get serious about con. ed.”. How are you going to do that?

The first task is to define continuing education. Some ideas to consider:

- Keep in mind the possibility of a broad definition which includes academic learning, spiritual growth, and improving physical health, or “mind, body, and spirit”.
- As discussed at last year’s NAAD conference, replacing the concept of ‘continuing ed’ with the concept of ‘life-long learning’ will enable you to help people go through the process of determining their own needs and the habit of reflecting upon them.
- Use flexibility in determining what “counts” as continuing ed – it could be counseling, a structured weigh-management program, or spiritual direction.
- Some deacons will have continuing education requirements in their careers (counselors, chaplains, teachers, nurses). Consider whether these can overlap with their con. ed. requirements as deacons.

Also consider the relationship between lifelong learning needs and pastoral care of the deacons. The Archdeacon or mentor deacon should keep in contact with the deacons and, in the process of providing pastoral care to them, help them go through the process of determining their own need for lifelong learning.

The motivation for lifelong learning comes from within when a person reflects upon their own needs – what will fill this hole that I’m feeling? What will enable this ministry that I have a desire or passion to lead?

Another way of motivating deacons to lifelong learning is to give them opportunities to share their lifelong learning experiences. One deacon may hear about the learning experience of another deacon and “catch” the enthusiasm for engaging in it themselves.

Some form of accountability or recognition should be built into the requirement for continuing ed.

It should not cost the deacon to engage in continuing ed, but should be included in the diocesan and/or parish budget.