

CONFERENCE OF ARCHDEACONS AND FORMATION DIRECTORS
NEW ORLEANS, LA
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OPEN SPACE SESSION

TOPIC - MULTIPLE ORDER FORMATION PROGRAMS

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In the Diocese of Oregon, we launched the Academy for Formation and Mission whose purpose is to form leaders. In living into their Baptism, some of the students will be discerning whether to pursue ordination and others will be postulants and candidates for the diaconate and the priesthood. The Academy seeks to form all orders together, complemented with order-specific formation.¹ Throughout the three years academic studies will be integrated with praxis. During the spring and summer terms, we plan to offer a variety of practice-oriented classes, including immersion experiences, emerging worship, administration, etc.

After completing 450 hours, students will receive a Certificate of Theological Studies (see attached). At this point there are no plans to seek accreditation.

Our group discussed how this program might transfer to other dioceses which have similar ideas about forming different orders together. There is consensus that there is much value in having the orders learning together, especially as it will help everyone appreciate each order's values. That we ground everything in our Baptismal Covenant is crucial.

There are requirements in some dioceses that priests receive a masters degree prior to ordination, although TEC's canons are more flexible. For future priests who want the flexibility of moving to other dioceses, programs like the Academy may be helpful in discernment.

One area of energy concerned the formation of leaders from underrepresented populations. The Academy allows people to continue working, raising families, and studying without dislocation. The curriculum is comprehensive enough to provide a solid foundation in theological studies which can be supplemented later.

We also have plans to enhance the Academy's ability to serve by offering distance learning and mentoring.

¹ At this point, those pursuing the priesthood may be expected to attend a seminary for one year.