CHRISTIAN FOUNDATIONS FOR MINISTRY

Mission Statement

CHRISTIAN FOUNDATIONS FOR MINISTRY is a program designed to help Christian adults recognize their baptismal call to exercise their gifts in service to the Church and to the world. It is the focus of the Ministerial Development Center. Courses are foundational in nature and intended to prepare candidates for other ministry formation programs.

The Second Vatican Council clearly proclaimed the universal call to holiness. The Christian Foundations for Ministry program affirms the uniqueness of this call and the unique response that it requires from all persons. The program encourages candidates in their faithful proclamation of the Gospel in Word and Sacrament through their service to the Church and to the world.

Christian Foundations for Ministry challenges, enables and supports the People of God through an awareness that understands, a caring that enables, a ministry that serves and a structure that enriches. The program is designed to respond to the cultural and social pluralism of the Church of Newark.

Christian Foundations for Ministry emphasizes that spirituality and growth in God can be realized anywhere, in any walk or stage of life, occupation or profession. The program seeks to form a community of persons who will participate in the development of society and share in the life and mission of the Church.

Goals of the Program

The goals of the Christian Foundations for Ministry program follow:

—To form a knowledgeable, prayerful, community-oriented laity by providing foundational courses in current Catholic theology, spirituality and ministerial skill development.

—To help each person embrace more fully his/her own life situation by bringing into it the Good News of the Gospel.

—To provide a foundation which will empower persons to discern their call to a
particular ministry.

--To establish an ongoing process for enrichment in adult faith formation and spiritual development.

--To integrate social justice awareness in the spiritual formation program.

--To form a community of persons who will participate in the development of society and share in the life and mission of the Church

--To respond to the needs of the Archdiocese of Newark for lay leadership in the parish/Church of Newark.

--To embrace the multiculturalism of the Archdiocese of Newark

Objectives

To realize the desired goals, the Christian Foundations for Ministry program establishes the following objectives:

--To encourage pastors/parishes to call regularly all baptized Catholics to discern their particular gifts (charisms) and invite them to respond to ministries within the Church and the world.

We consider it central to the strength, meaningfulness and utility of the Christian Foundations for Ministry program that there be a clear call to lay ministry from the Archdiocese and from each parish.

--To provide pastors/parishes with a core curriculum as part of their program of preparing parishioners for ministry and enriching those already in ministry.

--To offer a program that will prepare people with foundational courses appropriate for recommendation for certification in a particular ministry.

--To establish and maintain a program that will enable persons to recognize and develop their spiritual gifts and personal skills for ministry in the Church and in the world.

--To respond to the social and cultural pluralism of the Archdiocese of Newark by offering courses and retreat experiences in languages appropriate to the particular
community of believers

--To offer opportunities for ongoing spiritual enrichment for those who have completed Christian Foundations for Ministry.

--To provide retreat experiences that invite candidates and "graduates" of the program to a deeper relationship with God, with themselves and with others.

--To conduct, as requested, "evenings of information" in parishes to introduce the Christian Foundations for Ministry program and encourage spiritual growth and involvement in ministry.

--To adhere to Archdiocesan policies, especially those of the Ministerial Development Center and the Vicariate for Pastoral Life.

--To cooperate and collaborate with other Archdiocesan offices.

THE PROGRAM

THE CHRISTIAN FOUNDATIONS FOR MINISTRY PROGRAM has been developed as an adult faith formation and educational process of the Archdiocese of Newark. The purpose of the program is to form a knowledgeable, prayerful and community-oriented laity by providing foundational courses in current Catholic theology, spirituality and ministerial skill development. Christian Foundations for Ministry is the focus of the Ministerial Development Center of the Archdiocese of Newark. It is a three-year program designed to help Christian adults recognize their baptismal call and exercise their talents in service to the Church and to the world.

Foundational courses offered by the Christian Foundations for Ministry program prepare candidates for commissioned ministry formation. This specialized ministry formation is offered by particular offices in the Vicariate for Pastoral Life and by programs offered at the Seton Hall University School of Theology and other colleges/universities with offerings focused on spiritual formation and specific ministerial skills. Such areas of ministry include Evangelization, Family Life Ministries, Social Justice, Youth and Young Adult Ministry, Liturgical Ministries as well as Spirituality in the Marketplace.
The Office of the Permanent Diaconate requires that those men preparing for ordination to the Permanent Diaconate complete the Christian Foundations for Ministry program before ordination. These candidates follow the guidelines established by the Office of the Permanent Diaconate as well as those established by the Ministerial Development Center as they move through the Christian Foundations for Ministry program.

**PERSONAL GROWTH/SPIRITUAL FORMATION**

THE DOCUMENTS OF VATICAN H call each person to respond to the graces of baptism and to prepare personally for the apostolate. Better self-knowledge enables one to evaluate more accurately the talents and potential with which God has enriched him/her and to exercise more effectively those gifts of the Spirit which are to be shared and used for the good of others. It is evident, then, that all of the faithful are called to the fullness of Christian life. This holiness enriches our relationships with God, with ourselves and with one another. Thus we enter into a more human way of life.

Christian Foundations for Ministry emphasizes that spirituality and growth in the Lord can be realized anywhere, in any walk or stage of life, occupation or profession. That is why the program starts where each one is—whether married or single, working or retired, involved in ministry or not. A goal of the program is to help each person embrace more fully his/her own life situation by bringing the Good News of the Gospel into its midst.

The Christian Foundations for Ministry program, in addition to regularly scheduled sessions, requires throughout the three years a retreat experience in each of the cycles: Fall, Winter and Spring.

The retreat is offered in the language appropriate for each particular group of candidates: English, Spanish or Portuguese.
DESIGN OF THE PROGRAM

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES
EACH OF THE THREE YEARS of study and formation consists of eight-week courses offered in fall, winter and spring. The weekly class meets for a two-hour session at different parishes throughout the Archdiocese. These parish sites are referred to as Formation Centers.

Participants are invited to proceed step-by-step through the program. Those beginning the program may attend a few sessions before making a commitment to the three-year process. While it is recommended that candidates begin with the course on The Old Testament and Spirituality, one may begin with any of the courses when this is warranted. This arrangement is made with the Director of the Ministerial Development Center in collaboration with the instructor.

RETREAT/PRACTICUM
IN EACH OF THE CYCLES there is a day for retreat/practicum. This is held on a Saturday or Sunday at a central location such as the Archdiocesan Center. Suggestions for prayer and reflection in preparation for the retreat are sent to all of the Formation Centers as the retreat date approaches.

The retreat offers a general presentation given in the language appropriate for each component: English, Spanish or Portuguese. Following this, there is a practicum specific to each year. The theme for the practicum is related to the course for that particular cycle and is given in the appropriate language.

ROLE OF ADMINISTRATION
CHRISTIAN FOUNDATIONS FOR MINISTRY is the focus of the Ministerial Development Center. The Administration consists of the Director of the Ministerial Development Center and the County Directors, under the supervision of the Vicar for Pastoral Life. The Director of the Ministerial Development Center is responsible for the various Formation Centers set up throughout the Archdiocese. In each of the four counties—Bergen, Essex, Hudson and Union—there is a County Director to assist in carrying out the policies and procedures regarding Christian Foundations for Ministry. The Directors work in collaboration with one another with the Vicar for Pastoral Life.

The Archbishop of Newark charges the County Directors, along with the Director of the Ministerial Development Center, with the following: --To
monitor the Formation Centers in the county to insure that the instruction imparted is in accord with the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church.

--To evaluate the overall effectiveness of this program in two areas:  
1) That the program forms true Christian ministers; i.e., Catholics who have a knowledge of their faith and are imbued with a true spirituality and spirit of service.

2) The candidates are people who joyfully serve in their parishes, who are positive aids to the pastor and his staff.

Thus the County Director undertakes the following:

--To visit each Formation Center within the county and interview candidates at least once during the year.

--To contact the Director of the Ministerial Development Center immediately in the case of a serious problem.

--To fill out the evaluation form regarding the Formation Center and return it to the Director of the Ministerial Development Center before the end of that particular cycle.

--To engage in the ongoing evaluation of all aspects of the program. --To make suggestions regarding new instructors.

--To interview prospective instructors.

--To collaborate with the Director of the Ministerial Development Center in setting up new Formation Centers in the county.

--To attend administrative meetings requested by the Director of the Ministerial Development Center and/or the Vicar for Pastoral Life.

--To meet with new instructors and review all aspects of the program with them.

Each County Director will have an assistant director who will assist him in carrying out the same responsibilities in the Spanish-speaking and Portuguese-speaking communities.

The directors and assistant directors will maintain open communication with one
another, with the instructors and candidates in the program and with the Vicar for Pastoral Life.

PROFILE OF THE CANDIDATES
CHRISTIAN FOUNDATIONS FOR MINISTRY is designed for those who want to
--deepen and enrich their personal relationship with God --
assume responsibility for their own spiritual formation --
examine their lives in light of the Gospel
--discern their giftedness for ministry
--respond to the needs of the Church and the world.

The program welcomes new parishioners, newly initiated Catholics, anyone who is searching for a role in the life of the parish, the Church, society. It is an excellent follow-up to RCIA.

Those who are already engaged in parish ministries and feel they need further study and spiritual formation are also invited to attend the program. These ministries include RCIA coordinator, team member or sponsor, evangelization committee member, youth or young adult minister, liturgical minister, soda! justice minister or leadership minister in any area of parish life.

Men aspiring to ordination to the Permanent Diaconate are required to complete Christian Foundations for Ministry before ordination. The Office of the Permanent Diaconate and the Ministerial Development Center encourage their wives to attend the program also.

There are special students who do not seek to become commissioned ministers but want to deepen their relationship with God. These candidates are considered on an individual basis for admission into the program.

PROFILE OF INSTRUCTORS
INSTRUCTORS ARE PERSONS whose educational background and spiritual formation experience qualify them for this role in the Christian Foundations for Ministry program. The role of instructor is open to all persons whose educational background and experience in spiritual and/or ministerial formation qualify them for the role.
Instructors are expected to satisfy the following qualifications:

--Hold preferably a master's degree or a bachelor's degree in spirituality, theology, pastoral ministry or related area (in some instances a Certificate in one or more of the same areas is accepted when the instructor's experience warrants his/her admission into the program as instructor)

--Be a practicing Catholic

--Have experience in working with persons or groups in parish activities or with other groups related to life experience.

--Exhibit a willingness to abide by guidelines of the Ministerial Development Center and adhere to Archdiocesan policies.

--Manifest a positive attitude towards Church and ministry within the parish/Church.

Instructors are selected through a collaborative process among the Directors and Assistant Directors of the program and the Director of the Ministerial Development Center. In this process, a resume is submitted to the Director of the Ministerial Development Center, and there is an interview with the potential instructor by the County Director or the Director of the Ministerial Development Center. Recommendation by the interviewer for a new instructor to come into the program is made to the Director of the Ministerial Development Center or the County Director and also the Vicar for Pastoral Life.

**ROLE OF THE PASTOR**

**THE PASTOR HAS AN ACTIVE ROLE** in calling forth leadership in Church ministries. His support and encouragement are vital to the candidate. The Ministerial Development Center maintains ongoing conversation with the pastor regarding persons from his parish who are in the program. The beginning candidate submits a letter of recommendation from the pastor in order to be accepted into the Christian Foundations for Ministry program.

As a further symbol of the pastor's support and affirmation, he is invited to assume responsibility for half or all of the tuition. This commitment and affirmation continues through the three years. The candidate receives a parish sponsoring form at the Formation Center and presents it to the pastor. His signature indicates his commitment. The form is provided by the Ministerial Development Center.
ROLE OF THE MENTOR

THE MENTOR ASSISTS the candidate in reflecting upon his/her experience of the Christian Foundations for Ministry program and also his/her ministerial experience. Through this conversation, the candidate is encouraged to learn how to integrate his/her theology, personal spirituality, church practices and skills in such a way as to grow spiritually and competently as a minister in the Church.

In determining his/her mentor, the candidate will submit the information to the instructor. The candidate and the instructor will mutually agree on the process and the mentor.

Those who have completed the Christian Foundations for Ministry program may undertake the ministry of mentor. Each year the Ministerial Development Center will offer a course in mentoring for those who have completed the program and who feel called to this ministry.

A mentor may also be a member of the pastoral staff, a spiritual director, or someone in like ministry. The background and experience of this mentor will determine whether or not he/she will be expected to attend the course on mentoring.

In order to assume the ministry of mentor, in addition to completing the course on mentoring, one who completed the Christian Foundations for Ministry program needs to be recommended by an instructor and be interviewed by at least two persons on the Advisory Board for the Christian Foundations for Ministry program. Recommendation by parish leadership suffices for mentors coming from another professional group.

ROLE OF THE FORMATION CENTER

THE FORMATION CENTERS THAT CARRY OUT the Christian Foundations for Ministry program are located at various parishes throughout the Archdiocese.

A request is made to the pastor by the Director of the Ministerial Development Center or the County Director for the use of the parish facility for a Formation Center. In some instances this is done through personal contact; in other situations, through the pastors' mailing.
Information is disseminated to all of the parishes by the Ministerial Development Center in the spring and early summer. In addition to the pastors' mailing, bulletin announcements in the appropriate language(s) for the congregation are sent to the parishes; brochures and posters are distributed to the churches.

Those parishes expressing an interest are invited to establish a host site for the Christian Foundations for Ministry program. The pastor determines when during the week sessions will be held.

The Ministerial Development Center in conjunction with the County Director offers to parishes "evenings of information" regarding the program. These evenings are scheduled at the invitation of the pastor. Pastors in nearby parishes are notified concerning this offering, and an invitation to attend is extended to the parish.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

APPLICATION
APPLICANTS CONTACT the Ministerial Development Center or the County Director of the Christian Foundations for Ministry program. They do this by filling out the form in the promotion brochure or by calling the Ministerial Development Center at the telephone number listed in the brochure. Brochures are made available in the parishes by the Ministerial Development Center.

Registration takes place the first evening of each cycle at the Formation Center. While it is preferred that a prospective candidate be in touch with the Director of the Ministerial Development Center or the County Director before entering into the program, a person may register without this conversation.

At the time of registration, candidates fill out a personal information form to begin a file in the Ministerial Development Center.

Candidates intending to complete the three-year program are asked to submit to the Ministerial Development Center by the end of the Winter Cycle of their first year in the program the following: a letter of recommendation from the pastor, a personal letter addressed to the Director of the Ministerial Development Center or the County Director stating their reasons for wanting
to be in the program and their expectations of the Christian Foundations for Ministry program.

Men aspiring to ordination to the Permanent Diaconate and their wives are accepted into the Christian Foundations for Ministry program at the recommendation of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate. While they fill out a personal information form at the time of registration for the program, recommendation from the Office of the Permanent Diaconate suffices for their acceptance.

ADMISSION

PARTICIPANTS ARE INVITED to proceed step-by-step through the program. It is advisable that a prospective candidate attend a few sessions, perhaps four, before making a commitment to begin formally the program.

An applicant is assessed according to the following qualities. The person --is a practicing Catholic
--exemplifies a positive attitude toward Church and ministry -- has served the parish as a volunteer in some capacity -- demonstrates leadership abilities --has the recommendation of parish leadership --enjoys good mental and physical health.

The program is open to those of other Christian denominations; however, courses adhere to the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church and the Documents of Vatican II. With the exception of being a practicing Catholic, non-Catholics are assessed in the same manner as Catholics in the admission procedure and throughout the Christian Foundations for Ministry program.

ORIENTATION

ORIENTATION FOR NEW CANDIDATES is held at the Formation Center the first session of each cycle. Orientation is the responsibility of the instructor at the site. The County Director in his visit to the site will also review components of the program.

SPECIAL STUDENTS

A PERSON WHO WISHES TO ENROLL in the Christian Foundations for Ministry program but who does not wish at that time to become active in any particular ministry may register as a "special student."

A "special student" is also one wishes to participate in a particular cycle(s) because of interest but does not wish to enter into the three-year process of Christian Foundations for Ministry. Ore may do this with permission from the Director
of the Ministerial Development Center who, in turn, will collaborate with the County Director and instructor in making this decision.

A "special student" may at any time enter the three-year program. He/she will be given credit for the courses previously completed satisfactorily.

It is preferable that these students begin with the Fall Cycle of the year so that cohesiveness or bonding in the group is not disturbed.

THE FORMATION CENTER
THE FORMATION CENTER IS VIEWED as a spiritual and ministerial community in itself.

At each Formation Center, there is a volunteer secretary to assist the instructor and the Ministerial Development Center in handling business matters and providing for the smooth running of the Center. The volunteer secretary may volunteer him/herself, be invited by the instructor to fill this role, or be requested by the group. Responsibilities include the following:

--keeping a record of attendance at the Formation Center
--collecting fees for tuition and course materials
--sharing information that is sent to him/her with the instructor and candidates at the Formation Center
--serving as a liaison with the pastor at the site and the Ministerial Development Center.
--notifying the Director of the Ministerial Development Center of any changes at the formation center site which would affect the program.

The instructor and volunteer's secretary constitute staff at each of the Formation Centers. The staff provides for the smooth operation of the local facility with special attention to the needs of individual candidates. The staff is expected to attend meetings scheduled for them by the Ministerial Development Center.

All Formation Centers participate in the evaluation procedures. These include the following:

--self-evaluation at the end of each cycle
--evaluation of the course and retreat at the end of the Fall and Spring Cycles
--evaluation of the experience with the Ministerial Development Center
--evaluation of the physical aspects of the site.
PROBLEM SOLVING
A PERSON IN THE CHRISTIAN Foundations for Ministry program discusses
his/her conflict situation first with the person(s) involved in an attempt to come
to understanding and reconciliation.
If this attempt at resolution fails or is ineffective, he/she may submit within ten
working days a written communication to the Director of the Ministerial
Development Center. He/she will attempt to resolve the conflict by discussing
the situation with all parties concerned within ten working days. The Vicar for
Pastoral Life may be consulted if the situation warrants it. This consultation is done
with permission from the person(s) involved in the conflict. All deliberations are
confidential.

When reconciliation cannot be reached, the Advisory Board at their next regular
meeting will study the conflict situation. Within thirty working days from that
meeting, a decision will be rendered. This will be forwarded to all parties
concerned. This decision is final.

COURSE PROCEDURES

REGISTRATION/LATE REGISTRATION
REGISTRATION TAKES PLACE the first evening of each cycle at the
Formation Center. In Year I, new candidates may register up to the third week
of the Fall Cycle.

ATTENDANCE
CANDIDATES ARE EXPECTED to be present for all sessions of the cycle.
Participation in the Christian Foundations for Ministry retreat/practicum for
each cycle is required.

If a candidate must be absent for a particular session in the cycle, he/she may
attend that session at another Formation Center during the week. It is advised
that the candidate call and check with the Formation Center first to be sure there
have been no changes in schedule.

For serious reasons, a candidate is permitted two absences during the eight-week
cycle. The candidate is directly responsible to the instructor for the session
missed.

Make-up procedure is as follows:
--If the absence is expected, arrangements must be made with the
instructor beforehand to determine the manner in which the session will
be made up.

--If unexpected, the instructor must be notified during the week, if possible.

--Another candidate in the group may be asked to take notes and obtain handouts and assignments.
--It is expected that make-up is completed by the following class session, if possible.

CANCELLATION OF CLASS
IF A SESSION MUST be canceled for any reason, the instructor will let the candidates know as soon as the information is available.

When an instructor cannot be present for a session, he/she will call the Ministerial Development Center to request a substitute teacher.

If a substitute instructor is not available and the session must be canceled, the Director of the Ministerial Development Center will notify the volunteer secretary to begin the telephone relay system to notify candidates.

In the case of an emergency situation at the Formation Center site, the Director of the Ministerial Development Center will notify the volunteer secretary of the Formation Center so that candidates can be notified through the telephone relay system. The arrangement is that the Formation Center will notify the Ministerial Development Center in the case of an emergency affecting the group.

When there is an emergency because of inclement weather or other reasons, the candidates will be notified via a telephone relay. This system will be set up at the Formation Center. The volunteer secretary will notify the Ministerial Development Center of the cancellation.

If the volunteer secretary cannot be reached in any case of unexpected class cancellation, the telephone relay will be carried out by the Ministerial Development Center.

COURSES OF STUDY/TEXTBOOKS
A COURSE OUTLINE is available from the Ministerial Development Center for each of the nine courses. Candidates are expected to have a copy of the
course outline. It is of utmost importance that the instructor adhere to this course outline.

Required textbooks and readings are listed in the course outline. These are available either from the Ministerial Development Center or at bookstores in the area that handle this kind of resource. Readings that consist of articles from periodicals will be supplied by the Ministerial Development Center with permission from the author/publication.

ASSIGNMENTS/EVALUATIONS

INSTRUCTORS ISSUE ASSIGNMENTS such as written projects and/or oral reports and conduct an evaluation process during the cycle. Candidates are expected to participate in the group discussion which is part of each session.

At the completion of a cycle, the instructor gives a written assignment, usually in the seventh session, to determine the candidate's understanding of the material and whether or not he/she is ready to continue to the next course.

The written assignment is prepared and administered by the instructor. The instructor notifies the candidate of the results of the evaluation. At this time, the candidate is invited to continue in the program and register for the following course if the evaluation is satisfactory.

A Certificate of Completion for each course is given to the candidate who satisfactorily completes the cycle.

A Certificate of Achievement is received by candidates at the completion of the nine courses of the Christian Foundations for Ministry program. This is awarded at a prayer ceremony and rite of commissioning held each year.

When a candidate requests it, the Ministerial Development Center will forward to another diocese, to a college, university or seminary a record of the cycles satisfactorily completed.

UNSATISFACTORY EVALUATIONS

WHEN THE EVALUATION IS unsatisfactory, the candidate may be asked to repeat the cycle. This happens especially in the case of excessive absence for any reason. The person may continue to the next cycle if the reason for absence is no longer present with the understanding that he/she will make up the unsatisfactory cycle the following year since each course is given only once during the year.
Should it happen that a person is habitually disruptive or uncooperative in class, the matter will be referred to the County Director or the Director of the Ministerial Development Center who will meet with the candidate to discuss the situation with him/her. The candidate may transfer to another Formation Center if he/she wishes, this may be recommended by the Director at the time of the interview.

If a problem continues with the candidate and cannot be resolved, he/she and those concerned will enter into the problem solving process described on pages 18-19 of this Handbook.

**VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PROGRAM**

A CANDIDATE WHO HAS ENTERED into the three-year process may for a serious reason voluntarily withdraw from Christian Foundations for Ministry program.

He/she may enter the program at another time. Credit will be given for those cycles previously completed satisfactorily. When the candidate continues the program, he/she is asked to update information in his/her personal file.

**COMPLETION OF THE PROGRAM**

THE CHRISTIAN FOUNDATIONS FOR MINISTRY program leads to recognition, celebration and designation of those completing the three-year process. There is an Archdiocesan acknowledgment of achievement and recommendation for ongoing education/formation for certification in a specific ministry both within and beyond the parish community.

A one-on-one discernment session is available for third year candidates who want to investigate further ministerial development opportunities. This may be conducted by a director or instructor in the Christian Foundations for Ministry program, or the candidate may prefer his/her spiritual director or mentor for the interview in this discernment process.

Candidates completing the program are acknowledged at a public prayer and commissioning ceremony. Following the ceremony, there is a reception to which all are invited.

An annual retreat day is scheduled for all who have completed the Christian Foundations for Ministry program. Information regarding this is sent to "graduates" of the program and to pastors.
FINANCES

FEES
THERE IS A FEE for each of the cycles. The fee includes the retreat. As a symbol of his support and affirmation of lay ministry in the Church, it is suggested that the pastor assume responsibility for one-half of this fee. However, some pastors prefer to take responsibility for the full fee; some candidates prefer to take care of the fee themselves even though they are recommended and affirmed by the pastor.

The pastor makes this commitment through a parish sponsoring form given to the candidate by the Ministerial Development Center. This form is filled out and returned to the Center once during the year. It applies to all three cycles for a particular year.

The fee is the same for both special students and those who have entered into the three-year process.

Expenses incurred through the purchase of course outlines and textbooks are assumed by the candidate.

Fees are collected by the volunteer secretary in each of the Formation Centers and forwarded to the Ministerial Development Center.

SCHOLARSHIPS

A LIMITED NUMBER of scholarships are available. A person may request a scholarship through the instructor or the volunteer secretary at the Formation Center. Scholarships are also made available by calling the Director of the Ministerial Development Center, 973-497-4350.