

## The Diaconate in Hungary 2016 (Deacon Ferenc Molnár)

In the so-called socialist countries (except for the DDR), the permanent diaconate practically did not exist before the political regime change (in 1989-1990). Therefore, our countries have reintroduced the diaconate about 30 years later.

Moreover, the development of the diaconate has a certain specificity, as I already reported on various occasions:

*“The diaconate was not introduced **from the top down**, i.e. following the initiative of a bishop or based upon a decision of the Bishops’ Conference, but **from the bottom up**, i.e. as a result of the initiative of the interested parties and candidates. One could also express this fact in the following fashion: the leadership of the Hungarian Church did not explicitly desire the diaconate, but tolerated or allowed its introduction (initiated by some individuals).*”

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
	1	27	50	61	99	106	110	116	120	125	131

Over these years, there was a total of 146 ordinations. Relative to the priestly ordinations this represents approx. 10%.

26 years after the reintroduction of the diaconate, the following shortcomings can be singled out.

1. The Bishops’ Conference didn’t formulate any norms for the diaconate nor was any formation plan sent to Rome.
2. There is no person or organisational structure designated to be in charge of the permanent diaconate at a national level.

### Positive trends of the last few years

In the two dioceses in which the diaconate has managed to find its own profile to the largest extent (half of the deacons in Hungary work in those dioceses), the following developments have occurred over the last few years: there are now information days, advertisements, nominated episcopal delegates and formation courses. In these dioceses, there are, at the moment approx. 20 candidates journeying towards the diaconate. Ongoing formation events are also organised there.

### A look at the neighbouring countries

In Serbia and Ukraine – where Hungarian minorities also live – there are about 20 deacons. Their situation is very similar to the one we were in 10-15 years ago: no structures, no formation or ongoing formation, no profile of the diaconate, no persons in charge, etc. We, the Hungarian deacons and persons in charge of the diaconate are trying to be in contact with them and to foster an intensive collaboration.