

The Supreme Pontiff John Paul II has approved this "Ratio fundamentalis institutionis diaconorum permanentium", and ordered it to be published.

Rome, given at the Offices of the Congregations,
22 February 1998, Feast of the Chair of Peter.

CONCLUSION

89. The *Didascalia Apostolorum* recommends to the deacons of the first century: "As our Saviour and Master said in the Gospel: *let he who wishes to be great among you, make himself your servant, in the same way as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many*, you deacons must do the same, even if that means giving your life for your brothers and sisters, because of the service which you are bound to fulfil".⁹² This invitation is most appropriate also for those who are called today to the diaconate, and urges them to prepare themselves with great dedication for their future ministry.

90. May the Episcopal Conferences and Ordinaries of the whole world, to whom the present document is given, ensure that it becomes an object of attentive reflection in communion with their priests and communities. It will be an important point of reference for those Churches in which the permanent diaconate is a living and active reality; for the others, it will be an effective invitation to appreciate the value of that precious gift of the Spirit which is diaconal service.

⁹² *Didascalia Apostolorum*, III, 13 (19), 3: F. X. FUNK (ed.), *Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum*, I, o.c., pp. 214-215.

PIO Card. LAGHI

Prefect

✠ JOSÉ SARAIVA MARTINS

Titular Archbishop of Tuburnica

Secretary