



ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE
OF **CHARLESTON**

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Bishop of Charleston

DIACONATE HANDBOOK

2025
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Dedicated to the
Permanent Deacons and Wives of
The Diocese of Charleston

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The History and Overview of the Diaconate

History of the Diaconate:

The Second Vatican Council restored the permanent diaconate as an order in the Church. In *Lumen Gentium* 29, the council briefly described the nature and functions of the diaconate. It also described the need of the Church that this ministry would hope to meet. The council also left the decision to local Episcopal conferences, with papal approval, whether to restore the permanent diaconate in their own countries.

Pope Paul VI, in June 1967, issued a decree, *Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem*, restoring this sacred order of the Permanent Diaconate to the Church in countries which requested it. As early as the fifth century in the West, only men preparing for ordination to the priesthood were ordained to the diaconate. While this practice continues, the restoration of the Permanent Diaconate provides for men to be ordained to the office of Deacon permanently without any intention of accepting priesthood. In the United States, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops petitioned Rome for Permanent Deacons in order "to complete the hierarchy of sacred orders and to enrich and strengthen the various diaconal ministries at work in the United States with the sacramental grace of the Diaconate". This request of the NCCB was approved in Rome in August 1968.

In 1971, the Bishop's Committee on the Permanent Diaconate, under the chairmanship of Bishop Ernest L. Unterkoefler, then Bishop of the Diocese of Charleston, published guidelines for the formation and ministry of permanent deacons in the United States. These guidelines drew upon the experience and knowledge gained in the initial programs and upon a report of the Catholic Theological Society of America on the theology of the diaconate. The guidelines were written in a creative and open manner and served the American Church well as it began to assimilate the new ministry of the deacons.

In February of 1978, the committee was authorized to commission a comprehensive study of the permanent diaconate in the United States. A work ensued, entitled *A National Study of the Permanent Diaconate in the United States*, and it explained the strengths and weaknesses of the diaconate in the United States.

The leadership of Bishop John J. Snyder, bishop of the Diocese of St. Augustine, and later of Bishop John F. Kinney, brought a revision in these guidelines in November of 1984. The new guidelines were published in July of 1985.

Overview of The Permanent Diaconate in the Diocese of Charleston:

The diaconate program in the Diocese of Charleston was initiated by Bishop Ernest L. Unterkoefler and supervised by Msgr. Thomas R. Duffy, V.G., who was named the Director of Deacons. During the many years that Msgr. Duffy directed the diaconate program, formational changes and improvements were made. The first Deacons ordained for service in the Diocese of Charleston was in 1971. Deacons were sent to serve throughout the diocese in parochial and diocesan assignments. Msgr. Duffy led the program from its days of infancy to its time of growth. Constant updating was seen in the academic training program. The priests of the diocese assisted in this effort by the gratuitous and generous gift of their time to educate the deacons.

In 1990, under the leadership of Bishop David B. Thompson, Bishop of the Diocese of Charleston, Msgr. Joseph R. Roth was appointed Chairman/Director of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate for the diocese. In 1999 Bishop Robert J. Baker re-appointed Msgr. Roth as the Director of Deacons and he was assisted by Rev. Edward W. Fitzgerald as the Spiritual Director of the Program and Rev. Jay Scott Newman as the Academic Director, responsible for the Aspirancy and Candidate paths of the program.

Msgr. Joseph R. Roth guided the Diaconate program for the Diocese of Charleston until his death in 2011. In addition to his book, *The Deacon in Church Ministry*, Msgr. Roth served on the Executive Board of the National Association of Diaconate Directors (NADD) from 1995-1998 and as President of the Association from 1996-1997. He was assisted by Deacons George Tierney and Walt Pezanowski.

In 2011, Rev. Edward Fitzgerald was appointed the Director of Deacons, under the leadership of Bishop Robert E. Guglielmone, Bishop of the Diocese of Charleston. Fr. Fitzgerald was assisted by Deacon Andre Guillet, the Director of Diaconate Formation, as well as Deacons George Tierney and Gabriel Cuervo, who assisted regionally.

In 2014, Deacon Andre Guillet was named the Director of the Diaconate, the first Deacon to hold this position. He was assisted at various times by Deacons Gabriel Cuervo, Ron Anderson, Regi Armstrong, John Tempesco, and Tom Whalen. Deacon Andre retired in 2022 having formed almost 90 deacons during his tenure as Director.

Deacon John Tempesco succeeded Deacon Andre as Director of Deacons in 2022, with Deacon Regi Armstrong as Director of Formation. Fifteen men were ordained in February 2023, and 54 more are currently in formation, with 20 scheduled for ordination in February 2025. Classes are normally formed every two years if there are sufficient applicants for a cohort.

In July 2023, Bishop Jacques E. Fabre-Jeune, C.S. appointed Deacon Regi Armstrong as Director of the Permanent Diaconate, and in November he appointed Deacon Brian Justice as Director of Formation.

The Ministry of a Deacon:

The terms “deacon” and “diaconate” derive from the Greek word *diakonia*, which means service. The diaconate is an ordained ministry. It belongs to those central ministries of leadership to which Jesus Christ has entrusted the fundamental task of assuring that the Church become and remain the authentic sacrament of salvation. In ordination, a Christian blessed with the ability to minister is chosen from the members of Christ to occupy an office and to fulfill a role representing both Christ and the Church. In this sacrament, the bishop lays hands upon a man and, in the name of the Church, prays God to empower him with the gifts of the Spirit that will enable him to fulfill his role. Ordination is the sacramental differentiation of a Christian within the community of faith, so that he becomes for it a unique sign and instrument of what Jesus Christ is for the Church and of what the Church must be for the sake of Jesus Christ.

In communion with the bishop and priests, deacons are ordained for a distinct ministry, which is indicated by their name: they are ordained *for service*. They function in all three areas of the Church’s life: in the transmission of the Word, in the celebration of the sacraments, and in the community’s active love. The deacon, therefore, is more properly defined in terms of who he is rather than of what he does. He is a visible sign of the Church's call to *diakonia*—service. He is both servant and sacrament.

It must be remembered, however, that not everyone called to service in the church is called to the sacrament of Holy Orders. There must be a need within the local church for an ordained minister of service. (*Permanent Deacons in the United States, N.C.C.B., pp.15-16. The Diaconate, Barnett, p.165*). The pastor must perceive the need and the bishop must concur. Ultimately, the responsibility for issuing the call to ordained service in the sacrament of Holy Orders rests with the diocesan bishop. (The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, Schroeder, O.P., p.174.)

I. Formation Program for Deacons

Application Procedures:

The admission process to the Permanent Diaconate in the Diocese is an on-going process with well-defined requirements including the frequent and regular evaluation of candidates, a process that begins with the initial application and continues until ordination.

Selection of Deacon Candidates:

Selection of candidates for the permanent diaconate is accomplished through general publicity given to the program. The efforts of people already in ministry, especially priests, are necessary to encourage, identify, and welcome likely candidates to the diaconate.

Upon receiving the completed application, arrangements are made to interview the applicant and his wife, if he is married. The applicant is then asked to take the psychological tests administered by a clinical psychologist. The sponsoring pastor/supervisor is asked for his assessment of the candidate and to ascertain his understanding of the obligations he assumes in sponsoring a candidate, particularly his responsibility in the candidate's pastoral formation and his assurance of ministerial opportunity both before and after his ordination.

The completed application and written reports of the psychologist and the interviews are submitted to the Director of the Permanent Diaconate, who then, after consulting the Diaconate Board, recommends acceptance or rejection to the Bishop. Selection is made based on the needs of the Diocese of Charleston. Applicants are notified through the diaconate office as to whether or not the Bishop has accepted them into the program.

Wives of married deacon candidates are interviewed as part of the admission process. They are encouraged to attend formation sessions with their husbands and to participate as fully as possible in the entire formation program. The Bishop has asked that wives attend all sessions of the discernment year, if at all possible, and at least 4 classes per year for the remainder of the program.

The revised Code of Canon Law requires the written consent of the wife to her husband's ordination. It is presumed that this consent is based on her familiarity with the formation process, the deacon program, and her understanding of the

commitment her husband is making when he presents himself for ordination. More information can be found in the Diaconate Formation Manual.

II. General Guidelines for Deacons

Definition of Diaconal Status:

- FACULTIES:** A faculty is a grant by a higher authority enabling person to act in a way that the recipient would not otherwise be empowered or authorized to act. Upon diaconate ordination or incardination into the diocese, diaconal faculties are granted by the authority of the diocesan bishop, through the Director of the Permanent Diaconate. Upon transfer to a new ministry assignment, these faculties must be renewed.
- ACTIVE:** A deacon who has the faculties of the Diocese has an assignment from the Bishop and is currently working in that assignment. The deacon is subject to the liturgical, formation, and ministry guidelines.
- RETIRED-ACTIVE:** A deacon, in good standing, who because of age (75) has requested retirement from the Bishop, but requests to remain active. He has all the obligations and responsibilities of Active Deacons.
- FULLY RETIRED:** A deacon, in good standing, who because of age (75) or infirmity, has withdrawn from active ministry. He may still minister in whatever manner is mutually acceptable to him, his pastor, and the Director of the Permanent Diaconate. He is not required to maintain a ministry agreement or attend continuing formation but must remain current with all Safe Environment requirements. (Refer to Retirement Policy Section of this Handbook.)
- INACTIVE:** A deacon who is not assigned to a parish and is not performing functions normative to his ordination. Faculties and benefits of diaconal status cease while inactive.

**LEAVE OF
ABSENCE:**

A deacon who, at his request or the recommendation of the director, has been authorized by the Bishop to withdraw from active ministry for a fixed period of time. His return to active ministry would then require the approval from the Director of the Permanent Diaconate.

**ADMINISTRATIVE
LEAVE:**

A deacon who is relieved of all responsibility for an ecclesiastical office or function, as well as a participation in active ministry. He may not function or represent himself as deacon while this is in effect. This is usually the result of the deacon's own decision to withdraw from ministry without seeking laicization.

SUSPENDED:

A deacon whose faculties have been suspended by the Bishop, or his Vicar, and may not function as an official minister in any parish, agency, or institution of the diocese.

LAICIZED:

A deacon, who, voluntarily or involuntarily, is returned to the lay state by the Apostolic See, at his request, or at the request of the diocesan bishop.

Expectations of Assignment:

A permanent deacon in the Diocese of Charleston is trained for and ordained to minister as assigned by the Bishop and offers his time in accordance with the Diocese of Charleston Deacon Ministry Agreement. He continues to make his livelihood by his usual full-time employment and so offers, on a part-time basis, diaconal service voluntarily without financial compensation. It is understood that he will be available for diaconal service and will freely exercise his ministry at times beyond that demanded by his profession, work, and family.

Whether engaged in his profession, at home with his family, or exercising his particular ministry, the deacon is one who shares in the ministry of Jesus Christ at all times.

Deacons may be employed in full-time service in the Church, but these deacons receive such full-time employment by reason of some special expertise. They are expected to have the same preparation and certification as would anyone else hired for the same position. In this case, his particular diaconal ministry would be identified apart from his professional church involvement.

The deacon is not to be seen as a cleric leaving his previous employment and assuming a new identity. His identity is first and foremost a Christian man in his usual employment and lifestyle, now trained and formed by additional study and prayer for service in ministry to the community. He continues to dress as a layman, except when given the approval of their pastor to wear clerical garb in accordance with diocesan policy, and he does not assume a clerical title beyond that of "Deacon".

Thus, in the world in which he lives and works, the deacon provides a valuable sign of the Church serving the world and the secular community. His becomes an important ministry extending the mission of the Church far beyond its liturgical communities. Special diocesan diaconate lapel pins have been made for use by deacons. These pins are given to deacons upon their ordination. Deacons coming from other dioceses will also receive these upon their incardination into the Diocese of Charleston.

Having completed his period of training and formation, and having been ordained to the order of deacon, the deacon receives an appointment from the Bishop through the Director of the Permanent Diaconate authorizing him to exercise his diaconal service in a specific assignment. In the Diocese of Charleston, the appointment is most often to a parish. In some cases, it is to an institution or to a special apostolate of the Diocese.

The appointment terms are enumerated in a Ministry Agreement arrived at by the deacon, the Diaconate Office, and the pastor or director of the apostolate or institution to which the deacon is to be assigned. The Ministry Agreement specifies the ministries in which the deacon is to function. It also makes provision for the deacon to identify liturgically with a parish where he assists in the liturgy. The Ministry Agreement is renewed every three years. (When a new pastor is assigned, a new agreement should be enacted between the new pastor and deacon within 90

days, renewed at the usual three-year period.) The time of Ministry Agreement renewal also provides an opportunity for the deacon, the pastor or director and the Diaconate office staff to evaluate the deacon's service and to review his participation in continuing education and spiritual growth opportunities. Additionally, the pastor is asked to conduct an annual assessment using the Annual Assessment Form.

While a deacon is ordained for the general service of the Liturgy, of the Word, and of charity, not every deacon needs to function in every possible area. What the deacon does varies depending on the needs of the local community he serves and on his own capabilities and time. A deacon may be appointed to exercise a charitable service of caring for the sick and not to exercise the liturgical service of preaching. Since the deacon is ordained for service in the diocese, his ministry may be divided between a liturgical ministry in a parish and a ministry of charity in some diocesan or community apostolate. In short, the specific nature of the deacon's ministry is determined at the time of his appointment.

Prior to acceptance as a deacon candidate, he is expected to have the assurance of a parish, institution, or diocesan apostolate in which he will have an opportunity to exercise his ministry. This assurance is to be in writing and signed by the pastor or director. The appointment through the Diocesan Director then follows and is to the parish, institution, or apostolate under whose assurance the deacon has begun his preparation. In most cases this is the parish church of which the deacon has been a member but need not be so. Permanent Deacons are to be assigned only to those parishes and diocesan ministries where circumstances are such that they will be able to minister effectively and are needed.

After ordination, each deacon is mandated to participate in the required hours of continuing education. Deacons are expected to attend all sessions. Deacons are also required to attend the annual deacons' diocesan retreat. Wives of deacons are always invited to attend any of the Continuing Education days and the Annual Retreat. Continuing education requirements must be fulfilled before the deacon's Ministry Agreement will be renewed. The parish or institution which the deacon serves is expected to provide the cost of the annual days of education and retreat for the deacon and his wife.

FACULTIES FOR PERMANENT DEACONS

PAGELLA OF FACULTIES GRANTED TO

DEACONS IN THE DIOCESE OF CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that from Christ, deacons receive the strength to serve the people of God in the *diaconia* of liturgy, word and charity, in communion with the bishop and his presbyterate. Indeed, the ministry of clerics to the Church is conferred by the sacrament of Holy Orders (CCC. No. 875). The 1983 Code and other universal legislation of the Church provide an extensive list of faculties given to deacons.

The bishop grants faculties to his deacons, both incardinated and non-incardinated, who are domiciled in his diocese so that they may exercise their diaconal ministry in communion with the bishop and priests and so that they are “empowered to serve the people of God in the ministries of the liturgy, the word and charity (c. 1009 §3).”

To assist you in the exercise of your diaconal ministry within the Diocese of Charleston, I, Jacques E. Fabre-Jeune, CS, Bishop of Charleston, grant you the following faculties, which are to be exercised subject to the Pastor of the parish where you are appointed.

PREACHING

1. To assist in the ministry of the Word to the People of God in communion with the bishop and priests (c.757).
2. To preach the word of God, including the homily at the sacred liturgy. This faculty is to be exercised with at least the presumed permission of the pastor or rector of the church in which you are preaching. This faculty permits you to preach throughout the world unless a particular diocese has restricted or taken away this faculty of preaching or has required that the deacon receive express permission to preach there (c. 764).

BAPTISM

3. To administer the Sacrament of Baptism in accordance with the norms of law (c. 861).
4. To administer the Sacrament of Baptism to “infants.” An “infant,” is defined by Canon 97§2 as “a minor before the completion of the seventh year.” Therefore, deacons are not granted the faculty to administer the Sacrament of Baptism to those who are seven and older in age.

Therefore, since anyone who has reached the age of seven is to be baptized and confirmed as part of their initiation into the Church, and since liturgical law gives the faculty to confirm to the priest who welcomes the person into the Church, and since the celebration

of baptism and confirmation must be celebrated by the same priest in order for the confirmation to be valid, a deacon may not baptize anyone who is seven and older in age.

EUCCHARIST

5. To assist at the celebration of the Eucharist according to the rubrics and prescriptions of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal and of other liturgical law.
6. To distribute Holy Communion (c. 910).
7. To bring Holy Communion to the sick in the form of *Viaticum* in a case of necessity or with at least the presumed permission of the pastor or the chaplain (c. 911 §2).
8. To distribute the Eucharist outside Mass or to lead the faithful in Eucharistic worship outside Mass according to the approved rites for “Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass,” with the express delegation from the Bishop or his Vicar General (c. 918).
9. To expose the Most Holy Sacrament and give the Eucharistic benediction (c. 943).

MARRIAGE

10. To conduct the required pre-marital investigation and preparation for marriage and administer the necessary oaths.
11. To assist at marriages within the territory of the parish in which the deacon has been assigned provided he has been granted special delegation by the local pastor or the ordinary of the place (c. 1111 §§1-2). If the deacon is assigned to a personal parish, he may validly assist within the confines of the jurisdiction at marriages when at least one of the parties is the deacon’s parishioner (c. 1110). A deacon may **NOT** assist at a marriage between Eastern parties or between a Latin Rite Catholic and an Eastern party, Catholic or non-Catholic (c. 1108 §3).
12. All deacons assisting at marriages in the Diocese of Charleston are to follow particular law for the preparation and celebration of couples for marriage.

FUNERALS

13. To conduct vigil and related rites and prayers according to the liturgical norms.
14. To preside at funeral rites outside of Mass.
15. To conduct the rite of final commendation.
16. To conduct the rite of committal.

SACRAMENTALS

17. To impart only those blessings which have been expressly permitted by law (c. 1169 §3). A deacon can give blessings which are part of the liturgical celebration at which he presides: the rite of marriage outside of Mass, baptism, Holy Communion and *Viaticum*

outside of Mass, Morning and Evening Prayer, non-sacramental penance services and the blessing with the Holy Eucharist at benediction.

18. To preside at the communal celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours in the absence of a priest.

These faculties are valid until revoked, whether wholly or partially.

Ministry Agreement & Annual Assessment

To facilitate an orderly and professional agreement between the deacon and pastor, it is appropriate for both parties to enter into a Deacon Ministry Agreement. The agreement defines the level of expectation each may anticipate from the other and provides an objective document in the event arbitration is necessary.

The deacon is expected to dialogue with his pastor about these expectations, and it is suggested that the minimum available time be 10 hours of service per month, outside of liturgical ministry.

It is expected an agreement will be signed within the first 90 days of a new assignment of a deacon, or when a new pastor is assigned to the parish the deacon is currently serving. The ministry agreement is renewed every three years.

The deacon and pastor are encouraged to review the faculties granted to the deacon to define the sacramental work available to an ordained deacon in the parish. In addition, the deacon and pastor are asked to review pertinent ministries that fall within the deacon's competence, and which contribute to the overall pastoral work of the parish. Some ministry suggestions may be marriage preparation, Decree of Nullity process, youth ministry, outreach to sick and dying, bereavement ministry, training of liturgical ministers, and works of charity. Each parish has unique needs. It is the responsibility of the pastor and the deacon to develop the appropriate ministries to respond to those needs.

Deacon Annual Assessment

The pastor should conduct a written review of the deacon annually, based on the current Deacon Ministry Agreement. The Deacon Annual Assessment gives the

deacon and the pastor an opportunity to review their compliance to the agreement and potentially address areas of future adjustment.

A signed copy of the Deacon Annual Assessment should be sent to the Office of the Permanent Diaconate.

Diaconate Deaneries & Meetings

The Diocese of Charleston has seven (7) deaneries that are established by geographical region. The deaneries are Greenville, Rock Hill, Aiken, Columbia, Myrtle Beach, Beaufort, and Charleston. Each deanery has a leader and an assistant leader.

Meetings on a deanery level are a time to gather for prayer, fellowship, and for sharing information on ministry, service, and the local church that may be of interest to all.

Although Deacons gather and meet at various Diaconate functions throughout the year, at least two Deanery Meeting should be held annually (one of which is normally held at the retreat). In addition to active or retired Deacons and wives, widows, inactive deacons, or other appropriate guests should be invited.

Retreats

Deacons are required by Canon Law to make an annual retreat. The Diaconate Office schedules an annual retreat, which is paid for by the deacon's assigned parish. Wives are always invited to attend this retreat as well.

Deacons with faculties in the Diocese of Charleston are expected to attend the annual Diaconate retreat coordinated through the Diaconate Office. Periodically, a deacon may wish to be excused from a retreat. To do so, he must contact the Director of the Permanent Diaconate directly and provide sufficient reason to be excused and provide information for an alternative retreat.

If, with permission, the deacon participates in a retreat not coordinated through the Diaconate Office, a written acknowledgement of the retreat must be submitted to

the Diaconate Office as a way of maintaining the diocesan records of the deacon. Up to \$350 can be paid directly to the retreat center.

Deacons are strongly encouraged to participate in additional retreats for the sake of spiritual development in addition to the annual retreats.

Parishes are assessed \$400 annually per Active or Retired-Active Deacon for the retreat.

Continuing Education

The continuing formation of Deacons is a human necessity which must be seen in the continuity with the divine call to serve the Church in the ministry and with the initial formation given to deacons, to the extent that these are considered two initial moments in a single, living, process of Christian and diaconal life.

According to the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons, 2nd Edition, 48*, “Newly ordained deacons, therefore, are to be appointed to and supervised by a priest. This pastoral care of a newly ordained deacon, coordinated by the Director of the Permanent Diaconate, extends for the first five years after ordination, with a reminder that ongoing formation continues for the entire life of the deacon, until he passes from this life to the next.”

Deacons in active ministry are expected to attend the two Days of Education as well as the Day of Prayer organized by the Diaconate Office each year. Occasionally a deacon may wish to be excused from one of these days. To do so, he must contact the Director of the Permanent Diaconate at least two weeks in advance, provide sufficient reason, and request approval for how he will make up the required education/prayer time.

Those deacons who do fail to provide an acceptable explanation of absence prior to one of the days of continuing education or the retreat, may be subject to temporary suspension of faculties. If a deacon fails to attend, or fails to give notice of nonattendance, steps may be taken to suspend faculties until a suitable resolution is made in agreement with the Deacon, the Office of the Diaconate, the Pastor, and the Bishop.

Parishes are assessed \$200 annually per Active or Retired-Active deacon for the Day of Prayer and Days of Education.

Episcopal – Presbyterate – Diaconate Relationships

The parish provides an ecclesial context for a deacon’s ministry and serves as a reminder that a deacon’s labors are not carried out in isolation, but in communion with the Bishop, his priests, and all those in varying degrees share in the public ministry of the Church.

The deacon has an obligation to respect the Office of the Bishop, his pastor, and priests, and to cooperate conscientiously and generously with the Bishop, Presbyterate, and staff. The deacon also has a right to be accepted and fully recognized by his fellow clergy, and by all, for what he is, an ordained minister of the Word, the Altar, and Charity.

In a case where it becomes obvious that a deacon and a pastor/priest are not working well together, representatives of the Office of the Diaconate will meet with either or both parties to help process the concerns and to determine whether an agreeable solution can be worked out between them.

If it is determined that the situation is irreconcilable, the deacon and/or pastor/priest may request, in writing, to the Director of the Permanent Diaconate a reassignment. The deacon will remain with active faculties at the parish until a reassignment is made.

Function of the Deacon

The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church speaks of three areas of diaconal service: Ministry of Charity, Ministry of the Word, and Ministry of Liturgy.

Ministry of Charity

The deacon is ordained to be a witness to the Gospel through a life of service. A deacon serves through his person-to-person encounters; he ministers to the poor, the aged, the sick, prisoners. He participates in programs dealing with community

problems like substance or child abuse. The deacon works with youth and young adults in various parish and/or community programs. The deacon is obliged to be a positive influence for change in the world...so that society may be renewed by Christ and transformed into the family of God.

Ministry of the Word

The deacon proclaims the Gospel. He is an agent of evangelization, that is, of announcing the Good News of Christ in society. He also preaches at liturgical gatherings: he teaches in religious education programs, sacramental preparation programs, i.e. baptism, marriage, OCIA.

Ministry of Liturgy

The deacon assists at the Eucharistic Celebration, administers baptism, witnesses marriages, officiates at wakes and funerals, administers some sacramentals, and presides at prayer services.

The deacon has the flexibility to dedicate his special talents under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and through the Church, to contribute to the mission of the Church within his own world of community activity. The diaconate broadens the concept of ministry and makes it possible for others to share their talents in varying ways.

The summons of his bishop, the needs of the community, the deacon's own specific competence and guidance of the Church's pastor will help him decide how to use his resources wisely and effectively.

The purpose of the deacon is not to be seen only as supplying ministry where there is a shortage of priests. Rather, it is an authentic ministry in itself.

A brief list of offerings where deacons may help are below. This is by no means all inclusive. Countless new and different areas of ministry will appear constantly, and these areas of need should be seen as fertile soil for diaconate ministry.

Ministry of Charity

- Work with a facility to aid the poor and needy, i.e. soup kitchen, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Catholic Charities, etc.
- Assist with programs for the youth, such as Religious Education, youth group, and Scouting

- Visitation of the handicapped, shut-ins, elderly, sick
- Visitation of prisoners
- Visitation of the hospitalized
- Minister to young adults through campus ministry programs
- Participate in programs fostering Christian family life such as marriage preparation, Pre-Cana program, marriage encounter, etc.
- Participate in religious formation of adults through involvement in OCIA, adult education, Cursillo and retreats.
- Work with Right to Life groups
- Minister to divorced/remarried Catholics

Ministry of the Word

- Reads and preaches at liturgical services
- Conduct Sacramental Preparation Classes
- Assist and teach in the parish Bible Study Program

Ministry of Liturgy

- Service at the altar during Holy Mass and other Liturgical Services
- Proclaims the Gospel
- Preaches the homily, from time to time, at the direction of the Priest Celebrant
- Administers baptism
- Witnesses and blesses marriages
- Officiates at wakes, funerals outside of Mass, and burial services
- Presides at prayer services, novenas, Benediction, Stations of the Cross, Liturgy of the Hours, etc.
- Conduct classes and training for Lectors, Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, Altar Servers, Sacristans
- Holy Week and special services

Liturgical Guidelines for Deacons

Ministry of the Word

“The deacon participates as an evangelizer and teacher in the Church’s mission of heralding the Word. In the Liturgy of the Word, especially in the

Eucharist or in other liturgies, the deacon proclaims the Gospel. He may preach by virtue of his ordination and in accord with the requirements of canon law.”

(National Directory, 33)

1) PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

The proclamation of the Gospel is **not** a presidential function, but a ministerial one belonging to the deacon. Even when the deacon does not preach, his proper ministerial and liturgical role is proclaimer of the Gospel. (GIRM #34)

2) PREACHING THE WORD

The ministry of preaching depends on the faculties given by the Bishop of the Diocese of Charleston. According to the Code of Canon Law, "... deacons possess the faculty to preach everywhere, to be exercised with at least the presumed consent of the rector of the church, unless that faculty has been restricted or taken away by the competent ordinary or unless express permission is required by particular law." (CIC #764) In our diocese, as is the general rule throughout the United States, the Bishop encourages deacons to preach, and are given the faculty to preach by the Bishop through the Director of the Permanent Diaconate.

a) The deacon may preach when he is the presiding minister of a sacrament or liturgical rite:

- Baptism of infants
- Some of the Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults
- Sacrament of Matrimony
- Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament
- Wake Service, or church service of Christian burial (apart from Mass), and at the Rite of Committal
- Celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours
- Visitation of the Sick and Elderly and administering Viaticum

b) The deacon may preach at the following liturgies and occasions when he has received faculties from the Bishop through the Director of the Permanent Diaconate:

- Any celebration of Holy Mass with the permission of the pastor

and celebrant

- Any celebration of a sacrament in which he is not the presiding minister of that sacrament, with the permission of the pastor and celebrant
- Retreats, days of recollection, missions, novenas, etc. with the permission of the pastor and celebrant
- Sermons, talks, homilies to be given at ecumenical gatherings or services

c) In those instances where a deacon may wish to be a minister of a liturgical celebration in a parish or institution other than his own (e.g. marriage, baptism, funeral), he should first obtain the proper delegation or permission as required by Canon Law. This should be requested from the appropriate pastor or his delegate. He will also likely need a Letter of Good Standing from the Diaconate Office.

3) COMMENTARY

The Code of Canon Law (C.I.C.) distinguishes between "faculty" - the right to preach; "permission" - the use of the faculty; and "consent" the approval of the one who has local responsibility for pastoral care.

The ordinary may restrict the faculty to preach; national or diocesan legislation may establish norms for the use of the faculty; and the pastor might withhold his consent to preach after exercising his responsibility to keep careful vigilance over the "integrity" of the presentation. While careful care must be taken to respect the free exercise of the minister's right (C.I.C. # 18), these precautions indicate the Church's responsibility and concern for the Word of God (C.I.C. # 767).

Those charged with pastoral care (e.g. pastor, administrator) have the responsibility to see that the Word of God is preached with integrity (C.I.C. # 528) and have a right of vigilance over the preaching that takes place in their churches. They may refuse their consent for a deacon (or priest) to preach therein. However, this must be done only for a very serious reason, based on sure knowledge, and

after careful deliberation, and dialogue with the individual deacon. This is a grave decision and must be done with prudence and clarity. This decision should be made known to the Director of the Permanent Diaconate as well as the reasons for the decision.

Ministry at Mass

Deacons are expected to be intimately familiar with the Roman Missal, the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM), and *Redemptionis Sacramentum*. Please see the appendix for the “The Deacon at Mass: General Principles”, which provides guidelines for the Diocese of Charleston.

SACRAMENTAL MINISTRY

BAPTISM

- a) The deacon follows the Rite of Baptism as outlined in the Latin/Roman Ritual. He gives all the blessings as prescribed.
- b) Before baptizing, the deacon must:
 - 1) Receive the permission of the proper pastor
 - 2) Have the information on paper, including any legal or adoption decrees, concerning the material needed for recording the baptism in the proper baptismal register.
 - 3) Be certain the parents have been properly prepared for the reception of the sacrament by their child.
 - 4) Give the pastor or person in charge of recording the baptisms in the baptismal register, the information needed. This should be done as soon as possible and not delayed.

MARRIAGE

If a deacon is permitted to perform a marriage by the proper pastor, after having received the faculties to do so, he must do the following:

- a) Have in his possession all of the papers necessary. This includes the affidavits of freedom to marry properly filled out and bearing the parish seal where needed.
- b) Have in his possession the pre-nuptial investigation properly filled out in all areas and signed where needed. If permissions or dispensations are needed, the proper forms must be completed.
- c) Have in his possession the baptismal certificate (recent -within the past 6 months with all notations provided) of the Catholic party or parties. If the marriage is a mixed religion marriage, then he needs some proof of baptism on the part of the non-Catholic Christian. If one party is not baptized, then the deacon needs to be certain to request the necessary dispensation from the Bishop's Office. Before officiating at a mixed religion marriage or a marriage with dispensation from disparity of cult (worship), the deacon must have the needed permission or dispensation in hand.
- d) Have in his possession the 3 copies of the marriage license application from the probate judge. The deacon should fill these in as needed. One copy is given to the couple after the marriage (and in South Carolina, they must sign it as well as the officiating priest/deacon) and the remaining copies are mailed to the probate judge.
- e) Be certain that the couple has been adequately prepared for marriage according to Canon Law and the Diocesan Guidelines.
- f) Have delegation for the marriage (or in his own parish have permission) from the proper pastor.
- g) See that the marriage is properly recorded in the parish marriage register.

EUCHARIST

1) **DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION**

- a) The deacon is an **ordinary** minister of the distribution of the Eucharist.

2) EXPOSITION AND BENEDICTION

- a) The rite of benediction is divided into four elements: exposition, adoration, benediction and reposition, and is explained in Chapter III of the Roman Ritual: Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass (nos. 79-100)
- b) The deacon is a minister of the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and may bless the people with the sacrament.
- a) The deacon vests in alb and stole for exposition. He should wear the cope and humeral veil to give the blessing after the adoration. In the case of exposition with the ciborium only, the humeral veil should be worn.

LITURGICAL MINISTRIES

LITURGY OF THE HOURS

The celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, particularly morning and evening prayer, should increasingly be introduced into the life of parish communities, especially in Advent, Lent, Eastertide and on the great feasts. The deacon may preside at the Liturgy of the Hours and may lead the people in daily prayer, according to the General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours.

PASTORAL CARE OF THE SICK

The rites for the visitation and communion of the sick and dying are found in Chapters I and III of the Roman Ritual: Rite of Anointing and Pastoral Care of the Sick (nos. 42-63,93,114)

The deacon has always been closely associated with the pastoral care of the sick, the aged and the dying. While he may not administer the sacrament of anointing, the deacon is a minister in the communion of the sick, and of viaticum, the sacrament of the dying. Thus, the deacon should be particularly sensitive to the

need and wishes of the sick in the parish, in nursing homes, and in hospitals, and should work closely with pastors, chaplains, and special ministers of Communion so that Communion may be brought frequently to the sick.

rites of Christian Burial

All the rites of Christian burial, except the Eucharist itself, may be celebrated by a deacon. These rites include: the vigil or wake service; the non-Eucharistic rites in the church; and the rites at the cemetery.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

Background Screening & Safe Environment Training

In accordance with Diocesan policy, the Office of the Permanent Diaconate is responsible to insure all deacons granted faculties of the Diocese of Charleston are compliant with all Safe Environment requirements, including but not limited to the appropriate background screenings, Safe Environment trainings as determined by the Office Of Child & Youth Protection, the Diocesan Policy Concerning the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults from Sexual Abuse by Church Personnel, the Code of Conduct for Church Personnel and Ministerial Guidelines for Dealing With Minors and Vulnerable Adults, the Social Media Policy and any trainings required by the Office of Human Resources.

All personnel records related to deacons will be maintained by The Office of the Permanent Diaconate, the Office of Child & Youth Protection and the Office of Human Resources, as indicated.

Appropriate Title of the Deacon

The appropriate title for addressing deacons in the Diocese of Charleston is Deacon John Doe, or John Doe, Deacon, or Deacon and Mrs. John Doe. These are appropriate forms of address to use when referring to a deacon from the pulpit, in church bulletins, official correspondence, etc.

Spiritual Direction

It is recommended that all Deacons in the Diocese of Charleston have a Spiritual Director. Regular spiritual direction is of great assistance to deacons. Much can be gained in sincere and humble dialogue with a wise spiritual director, not only to resolve doubts or problems that arise throughout life, but for the necessary discernment to arrive at better self-knowledge and the ability to grow in faithful fellowship of Christ.

Retirement Policy for Deacons

Sacred ordination establishes a man in a permanent relationship with the Church. Therefore, in one respect, a deacon does not “retire” from the diaconate. However, having reached a certain age, it is reasonable to release a deacon from the responsibilities attached to his office.

Retirement Age & Policy Details

Deacons of the Diocese of Charleston may apply to retire when they reach their 70th birthday by submitting a signed letter to the Bishop that includes the reason(s) for retirement.

Deacons of the Diocese of Charleston must submit a signed letter of resignation from office when they reach their 75th birthday.

Letters must include one of the following: 1) Request to remain on active status, 2) Request to be fully retired, but with faculties, or 3) Request to be fully retired without faculties.

A copy of the letter to the Bishop must also be sent to the Director of the Diaconate.

Considerations

Each deacon’s ability to continue in diaconal ministry after retirement should be evaluated while also considering the needs of the diocese. The deacon should consult with his pastor/priest to define a subsequent ministerial role and service times consistent with the deacon’s capabilities, his wishes for continued service, and the ministerial needs of the parish.

Retired-Active (Active Status Beyond the Age of Retirement at 75)

If approved, the deacon remains on active status with a written ministry agreement with the pastor/administrator and a written letter of appointment and associated faculties from the bishop. The deacon is expected to attend the days of continuing education, annual retreats, and will be required to keep current requirements for background and safe environment training.

Fully Retired Status

A deacon in fully retired status is not required to maintain a Ministry Agreement, nor is the deacon required to meet ongoing formation requirements. He is invited to continue ministering as a deacon according to the needs of the parish, and as he desires and is able. He is required, however, to maintain background screening and Safe Environment Training current.

The fully retired deacon retains faculties of the Diocese (unless otherwise indicated) and is invited, and encouraged, to attend the days continuing education, retreats, liturgical and social gatherings or other activities offered to all active deacons of the Diocese.

A fully retired deacon will consult with the Director of the Permanent Diaconate and his pastor/administrator annually, or at any time his ministerial activities need to be adjusted due to health changes or other considerations.

If a fully retired deacon desires to no longer retain faculties, then he should notify the Director. A fully retired deacon without faculties no longer has Safe Environment obligations but cannot function as a deacon in any capacity.

Transition from Retired-Active to Fully Retired

For those who are Retired-Active and now desire to be Fully Retired (or their pastor/family believe it is everyone's best interest) an email should be sent to me and copy your pastor. Our office will then reply with an official memo of your change of status (as opposed to another letter from the Bishop), copying your pastor and the Vicar for Clergy. We will retain a copy in your files.

Retirement for Health Reasons

In the event of a deacon's poor health or disability, or other significant changes in his life, the option for him to withdraw from his formal and assigned ministry always exists. The deacon, his family, or the pastor/priest may make this request of the Bishop through the Director of the Permanent Diaconate. The Director will be responsible for consulting with all the parties involved for the sake of the deacon and his ministry.

Failure to Maintain Safe Environment Status

If any deacon fails to maintain his Safe Environment training requirements (or notifies us of his desire to no longer maintain them), he will be warned of the impending revocation of his faculties if he fails to comply within 21 days. After the time period has elapsed and our office's consultation with the Judicial Vicar, the Bishop will then notify the Deacon of the revocation of his faculties.

Deacons Ordained Outside the Diocese

PROCEDURE FOR REQUESTING FACULTIES AND ASSIGNMENT

Deacons who move into the diocese and wish to minister within it must obtain the required canonical faculties. The deacon should contact the Office of the Permanent to discuss the relocation to South Carolina, and to find an appropriate location for the diaconal assignment. While below are the requirements, please visit the appropriate diaconate webpage for the most current information:

[\(https://charlestdioocese.org/diaconate/permanent-deacons-moving-to-the-diocese-of-charleston/\)](https://charlestdioocese.org/diaconate/permanent-deacons-moving-to-the-diocese-of-charleston/).

- a) Application (available on website)
- b) Background screening through the Office of Child Protection Services
- c) Safe Environment: Virtus and Vulnerable Adults training, Code of Conduct, and Acknowledgement Form
- d) A Driver application with license and insurance
- e) Copies of all official documents, faculties received, etc.
- f) An overview of the training received, grades, and evaluations while in training
- g) A letter of recommendation and evaluation of your ministry from previous pastor
- h) A letter of recommendation and certification of good standing from the Director of the Permanent Diaconate or Bishop of prior diocese
- i) A letter from prior Bishop giving permission to serve in the Diocese of Charleston

- j) If married, a letter of approval from wife that she is in accord with his application for faculties and assignment in the Diocese of Charleston
- k) A letter of acceptance from local pastor requesting services of deacon
- l) Two letters of recommendation from members of the parish staff or fellow parishioners from the last parish served, or a work associate
- m) Photo of deacon and wife for directory

All items are sent to the Director of the Permanent Diaconate. Once these documents have been received, the Director will schedule a phone appointment with the applicant to discuss the ministry. The applicant will attend a workshop at the next annual retreat that details the diaconate policies within the Diocese of Charleston.

Upon completion of these steps, the Director of the Permanent Diaconate shall request the Bishop to make the assignment. At that time, faculties of the diocese will be given. He will then be assigned for a temporary period of six months. After this probationary assignment, if the deacon, pastor and pastoral staff are favorable, the faculties of the diocese may be renewed, and a permanent assignment granted.

While in the diocese, the deacon is expected to partake in the regular program for the Permanent Deacons of the Diocese of Charleston. Until such time as the deacon completes the excardination/incardination process according to the norms of the Code of Canon Law and the diocesan guidelines, he remains attached to the diocese in which he is incardinated.

PROCEDURE FOR LETTER OF GOOD STANDING

Anytime a deacon desires or is requested to exercise his ministry outside the diocese, he will need a Letter of Good Standing. Within the diocese, if a deacon serves at a parish to which he is not assigned, a pastor has the right to request a letter as well. The letter will NOT be issued if Background Screening and Safe Environment are not current.

Go to the Resources section of the diaconate webpage to download the checklist. (<https://charlestdioocese.org/diaconate/resources/>) Submit to the diaconate office per the instructions.

PROCEDURE FOR ASSIGNMENT TRANSFER

Upon ordination, Permanent Deacons are assigned to the parish or diocesan institution that sponsored their candidacy.

Permanent Deacons may request transfer from their parish or institution if:

- a) Deacon's residence changes from the boundaries of the parish or is too distant from the institution's location.
- b) Deacon and pastor/director agree that a change in assignment is in the best interest of the deacon and of the parish/institution.
- c) A serious personal reason that the deacon makes known to the Director of the Permanent Diaconate (or to the Bishop directly). The Bishop may make any changes in assignments as he sees needed.

Deacons must then request a change of assignment in writing to the Director of the Permanent Diaconate.

The request for transfer should include the following:

- a) Written permission from the current pastor/director to terminate the Ministry Agreement presently in force.
- b) Any written ministry performance evaluation the pastor/director wishes to submit.

The Director of the Permanent Diaconate will acknowledge, in writing, receipt of the Pastor/Director's permission to terminate the deacon's Ministry Agreement.

If another pastor/director and the deacon agree to a Ministry Agreement, the pastor/director and the deacon must submit this to the Director of the Permanent Diaconate. If approved, the assignment may then be made for a period not to exceed three years. Should a deacon be unable to secure an assignment, the Diaconate Office will make every effort to help the deacon find an assignment. When an assignment is agreed upon according to the norms mentioned above, the

Director shall request the Bishop to make the assignment. At that time, the faculties of the diocese will be given as needed, and as explained above.

PROCEDURE FOR INCARDINATION

After a period of no fewer than three years of ministering, should a deacon wish to seek incardination in the Diocese of Charleston, he must request a personal interview with the Director of the Permanent Diaconate. The deacon requesting incardination must be no older than 65.

The deacon should present to the Director:

- a) A statement in writing of his desire to be incardinated and his reasons for this request.
- b) A letter of recommendation and evaluation of his present ministry from the pastor of the parish in which he presently serves.

The Director and the deacon (and his wife) will review his (their) years of ministry in this diocese. Particular attention will be given to the fulfillment of all Diocesan expectations for diaconal ministry as delineated in our Deacon's Handbook. A reasonable assurance of the deacon's continued presence in our diocese is expected.

The Director may then prepare a letter requesting excardination. This petition, together with a personal petition written in the deacon's own handwriting, will be forwarded to the bishop of the diocese from which excardination is being sought.

Upon reception of the appropriate document of excardination, the recommendations of the Director and the present pastor will be forwarded to the Bishop requesting incardination into the Diocese of Charleston.

PROCEDURE FOR EXCARDINATION

Should residence in another diocese become permanent, the deacon, after fulfilling the requirements established by the local diocese, should begin the excardination/incardination process.

A request, accompanied by a letter of support from that diocese's Diaconate Director and the local pastor, should be sent to the bishop of the diocese in which the deacon seeks incardination.

Should the bishop be willing to incardinate the deacon, he will then forward the necessary document requesting excardination to the Bishop of Charleston. The deacon, himself, should put this request in writing and forward it to our Director of Deacons. Upon the recommendation of our Diaconate Director, with the Bishop's approval, excardination from the Diocese of Charleston may be granted. Upon receipt of the notice of excardination, the diocese in which the deacon now ministers may incardinate him.

PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING FACULTIES IN ANOTHER DIOCESE

Before departing from our diocese, the deacon should notify the Diaconate Office and inform the Office of his future address, since he is still incardinated in our diocese. If he plans to be involved in diaconal ministry, he must obtain verification of his ministerial status and receive a letter of introduction before departure. Further information to assist the deacon will be given to him at that time.

Upon establishing residence in his new diocese, he should contact the diocesan Director of the Permanent Diaconate in that diocese to ascertain the possibility for diaconal ministry. The local pastor may be able to assist in this matter.

Should the diaconate director of the diocese in which the deacon now lives, support his involvement in diaconal ministry, a request for the extension of faculties may be forwarded to the local bishop or may be given by the director of deacons in the name of the bishop.

If faculties are granted, the deacon may exercise his diaconal ministry. He remains incardinated in the Diocese of Charleston, and a yearly evaluation of his ministry will be required just as is done for all our deacons here.

Funeral & Burial

In the event of a Deacon's Death, the pastor or family should notify the Office of the Permanent Diaconate. The Diaconate Office will notify the Bishop and notification will be sent to the Diaconate Community. If possible, the Director of the Permanent Diaconate and/or the Deanery Leader will be present for the Funeral Mass.

The Funeral and Burial form should be completed by all Deacons in the Diocese of Charleston. The completed form will be maintained in the Office of the Diaconate and a copy should be kept with the Deacon and their representatives.

Procedures regarding funerals for Deacons in the Diocese of Charleston are as follows:

1. The vigil for the deacon should be done in the parish or church where the deacon served and be led by the Deacon Deanery Leader.
2. The deceased deacon should be vested in white alb, stole, and dalmatic.
3. The Funeral Mass should be held at the parish or church and celebrated by the pastor or his representative.
4. The homilist should be either the celebrant or another priest or deacon requested by the family or the deceased deacon while he was still alive.
5. Two deacons should be vested in alb, stole, and dalmatic to serve as Deacon of the Word and Deacon of the Eucharist. Other attending deacons should vest in white alb and stole. They will process in together and sit together.
6. The burial should normally be celebrated by a deacon.
7. Death notifications are sent from the Office of the Vicar General.
8. Deacons are encouraged to complete the Funeral and Burial Form and send a copy to the Diaconate Office. They should also inform their family of their desires.

Life Insurance

Incardinated Deacons in the Diocese of Charleston are eligible to receive a life insurance policy.

The life insurance policy was effective March 1, 2014. Going forward, newly ordained or newly incardinated Deacons are eligible to receive the life insurance policy on the first of the month following their ordination or incardination.

As an ordained deacon of the Diocese of Charleston the diocese provides you with a modest amount of life insurance coverage. The coverage is \$20,000. This reduces to \$14,000 at age 70 and \$9000 at age 75.

To be eligible you must be incardinated in the Diocese of Charleston and not employed full-time in a parish, parochial school, or the diocese.

It is important to fill out a beneficiary form and have it on file at the Office of the Permanent Diaconate.

CLERICAL GARB

Mass Vestments for the deacon are:

- **Alb** and **stole**, which is worn over the left shoulder, drawn across the chest, and fastened at the right side.
- **Dalmatic**, worn over the stole, but which may be omitted either out of necessity or for less solemnity.
- It is the responsibility of the parish to provide liturgical vestments (alb, stoles, dalmatics) in all the appropriate liturgical colors for their deacons.
- Albs worn by deacons of this diocese are to be white in color and should not be concelebration style albs or chasuble-albs. Concelebration albs and Chasuble albs are for use by priests.
- Cassock & Surplice are not required garments for deacon, unless the Pastor requires. In that case, the parish will supply these vestments.

Clothing outside of liturgical function:

- Normally, the deacon wears normal lay faithful clothing, keeping in mind that he is always a deacon and should avoid giving scandal.
- Polo type shirts and other clothing with the diaconal symbol can be worn when engaged in ministry.
- Deacons may wear a gray clerical shirt with the diaconate symbol of

cross and stole, with a white collar in the performance of ministerial duties, with approval of their pastor.

Marital Difficulties

Any deacon or deacon candidate, whose marriage is undergoing serious stress, should make this known to the Director of the Permanent Diaconate. If this problem should move into the public forum, the Director must be informed of the situation. Arrangements should be made for immediate counseling. Continuation in the program leading to ordination should be stopped and efforts made to save the marriage. Since marriage is the first vocation of a married deacon or candidate, it is imperative that this vocation be safeguarded. When the marital situation has been stabilized and a sufficient period of time has elapsed, the candidate may re-apply for the program of studies. The matter will then be determined by the Director, after consultation with the Diocesan Bishop, as to whether the candidate should re-enter the program.

In the case of a permanent deacon, the Director is to ask the deacon to go on inactive status. Should the deacon not wish to comply, the Director may place him on inactive status. Again, counseling is essential. Everything possible should be done to assist the couple in resolving the problem. When and if, in the judgment of the Director and after his consultation with the Bishop, the problem has been solved, and a sufficient amount of time has elapsed to indicate this, the deacon may apply to be returned to an active status.

In the unfortunate case of a legal separation or a divorce action taking place, the deacon is automatically placed on inactive status. Depending upon the nature of the case and the danger of scandal, the deacon may or may not be re-instated to function as a deacon. Only after consultation with the bishop of the diocese, may the Director of Deacons accept a request from a deacon to return to active status.

Celibacy Requirement

The Code of Canon Law maintains the requirement, whereby a married deacon who has been widowed may not enter a new marriage. In exceptional cases, the

Holy See may grant a dispensation for a new marriage or release from the obligations of the clerical state. In these instances, a widowed deacon should request a meeting with the bishop to discuss initiating the petitioning process.

Sexual Misconduct

A deacon (or any cleric) who attempts even a civil marriage incurs an automatic suspension. If he does not repent after being warned and continues to give scandal, he can be punished gradually by privations for even by dismissal from the clerical state. (CIC #1394)

If a deacon (or any cleric) has committed an offense against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue with force or threats or publicly or with a minor below the age of sixteen, the cleric is to be punished with just penalties, including dismissal from the clerical state if the case warrants it. (CIC #1395) Sexual misconduct, in any form, will not be tolerated by the diocese.

Support Groups

Deacons and their wives, as well as candidates and their wives, are encouraged to form local support groups to meet from time to time to assess their local needs and to assist and encourage each other in the ministry and in the family. It is left to the Diaconal Council and individual deacons to arrange for these groups.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DIACONATE DIRECTORS (NADD)

The Diocese of Charleston is a member of the NADD. The Director and/or the Director of Formation will normally attend the annual NADD Convention. They may also attend the National Directory Institute (focused on pre-ordination formation) and the Ministry and Life Institute (focused on post-ordination formation).

REGION XIV USCCB – PERMANENT DEACONS

The Diocese of Charleston is active in Region XIV and takes part in the bi-annual conferences and continuing education. The Director and/or the Director of Formation regularly attend the fall regional meeting of Diocesan Directors.

IV. STRUCTURE OF THE DIACONATE COMMUNITY

The Office of the Diaconate

Philosophy and Administration

Goals:

The fundamental goals of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate of the Diocese of Charleston are: 1) to train and form, by study and prayer, men who have demonstrated active church service and leadership for diaconal ministry, and 2) to direct and support the ministry of permanent deacons in the diocese. To accomplish these goals, the Bishop of the Diocese established an Office for the Permanent Diaconate. A deacon formation program was reviewed and approved by the Bishop's Committee on the Permanent Diaconate in 1990. The Charleston program strives to put particular emphasis on the notion of the deacon "as one who serves." The goals of the program are these:

1. To provide theological formation that will prepare effective ministers of the Gospel, and provide enough knowledge of ecclesiastical sciences to make them competent in the specific ministry they exercise;
2. To provide the means for the spiritual development and growth of permanent deacons and candidates;
3. To provide pastoral formation that equips the deacon with the pastoral skills needed in his ministry;
4. To provide family formation that allows families to support enthusiastically their husbands and fathers;
5. To provide on-going support and direction for deacons and their families.

Staff:

The staff of the Permanent Diaconate Office of the Diocese of Charleston shares the responsibility for direction of various aspects of the program in the following way:

The Director:

- a) Is appointed by the Bishop and reports to the Secretary of the Clergy.
- b) Has primary responsibility for program administration, for both the formation program and continuing education and retreats for deacons
- c) Coordinates the various formation programs, arranges for the screening and selection of candidates, and notifies candidates of their acceptance by the diocese.
- d) Will be available to arbitrate or give advice when problems and conflicts affecting permanent deacons and their ministry arise
- e) Proposes assignments for the deacons to the bishop for his appointment
- f) Maintains communications with the bishop, the pastors and priests, and the deacons of the diocese. He is also in contact with the Religious as needed.
- g) Submits an annual report to the Bishop
- h) Submits a budget to the Office of Finance and receives and dispenses the approved funds for the diaconate program
- i) Relates to the wives of deacons and candidates concerning the participation of their husbands in the program and matters of importance to them
- j) Attends national and regional meetings of Diocesan Directors.

The Director of Formation:

He is appointed by the Director of the Permanent Diaconate with the approval of the Bishop. He reports to the Director. He is responsible for overseeing and implementing the various pieces of the formation program to ensure an integrated program that meets the needs of the aspirants and candidates and those of the local church. He is involved in recruitment of those considering a vocation to the permanent diaconate.

Diaconate Board:

Established in 2013, the Diaconate Board is an advisory committee that consists of the Director of the Permanent Diaconate, the Director of Formation, two designated Diocesan Priests, one Religious, and three Deacons and wives.

The Board has the responsibility to assist with interviews for new applicants, identify strengths and weaknesses of the formation program and offer improvements, and to offer suggestions and resolutions for issues between Deacons and Pastors.

Diaconate Council:

The Diaconate Council consists of the Director, the Director of Formation, as well as the Leaders and Assistant Leaders of the seven diocesan deaneries.

Deanery Leaders are the point of contact for deacons within the given deanery. They report to the Director and pass along deanery information to the Diaconate Office. Deanery Leaders and Assistant Leaders serve for three years. After three years, the Assistant Leader becomes the Leader at the annual retreat. A new Assistant Leader is elected by the deacons of the deanery at the retreat.

Their roles are as follows:

- a) To form bonds with deacons and offer support
- b) Keep in touch with the widows and the retired deacons in their deanery
- c) Meet as a deanery at least twice a year. Wives, retired deacons, and widows should also be invited to these meetings. The gatherings should include discussions about the good, and the struggles the deacons are facing in their parishes.
- d) Inform the Office of the Permanent Diaconate of a Deacon who may be struggling with parish issues, health, or personal issues.

The Deacon at Mass

General Principles

- ✘ The Mass is the 'sacrament of unity" (91, 92) in which the faithful are nourished from the table of God's Word and of Christ's Body (28). This unity is expressed particularly in common posture (42), in communal singing (47), reverential silence (45, 56), and in sharing together of the one bread and one cup (83, 321).
- ✘ The assumption of the Roman Missal is that every Sunday and feast day, the Eucharistic liturgy will be celebrated with song (40, 115), with a cantor (104), with one or two readers (109), and with other assisting ministers (115).
- ✘ After the Priest, in virtue of the sacred ordination he has received, the Deacon has first place among those who minister in the celebration of the Eucharist. For the sacred order of the Diaconate has been held in high honor in the Church since the time of the Apostles. (94)

Mass with a Deacon

When there is a deacon present at the Eucharistic celebration, he should exercise his ministry wearing sacred vestments. The vestment proper to the Deacon is the dalmatic, worn over the alb and stole; however, the dalmatic may be omitted out of necessity or on account of a lesser degree of solemnity. (338)

The Deacon:

- ✘ assists the Priest and processes at his right side (unless he is carrying the Book of the Gospels, in which case, he precedes the Priest). At Diocesan Liturgies the Deacon carrying the Book of Gospels will follow the instruction given by the Master of Ceremonies
- ✘ ministers at the altar, both as regards the chalice and the book; (Roman Missal)
- ✘ proclaims the Gospel and may, at the direction of the Priest Celebrant, give the homily (66)
- ✘ guides the faithful people by giving appropriate instructions
- ✘ announces the intentions of the Universal Prayer
- ✘ prepares the altar, assisted by the acolyte, but it is the Deacon's place to take care of the sacred vessels himself
- ✘ assists the Priest in receiving the people's gifts
- ✘ assists the Priest Celebrant in distributing Communion to the people. (If Communion is given under both kinds, the Deacon himself administers the chalice to the communicants; and, when the distribution is over, standing at the altar, he immediately and reverently consumes all of the Blood of Christ that remains, assisted, if the case requires, by other Deacons and Priests). (182)

- ✘ purifies and arranges the sacred vessels
- ✘ carries out the duties of other ministers himself, if necessary when none of them is present;(171)

Introductory Rites

- ✘ Carrying the Book of the Gospels *slightly elevated*, the Deacon precedes the Priest as he approaches the altar or else walks at the Priest's right side (172).
- ✘ When he reaches the altar, if he is carrying the *Book of the Gospels*, he omits the sign of reverence and goes up to the altar. It is a praiseworthy practice for him to place the *Book of the Gospels* on the altar, after which, together with the Priest or Bishop, he venerates the altar with a kiss. The General Instruction uses the verb place rather than display or enthrone. This suggests that the *Book of the Gospels* be laid flat on the altar. Plexiglas or other sorts of display implements are not to be used on the altar with the *Book of the Gospels*.
- ✘ However, if he is not carrying the *Book of the Gospels*, he makes a profound bow to the altar with the Priest or Bishop in the customary way and with him venerates the altar with a kiss.
- ✘ If, however, the tabernacle is located in the sanctuary, all the ministers genuflect to it only when they first approach the altar and when they leave the sanctuary, **but not** during the celebration of Mass itself (274).
- ✘ Lastly, if incense is used, he assists the Priest in putting some in the thurible and incensing the cross and the altar (173).
- ✘ Once the altar has been incensed, the Deacon goes to the chair together with the Priest, and there stands at the Priest's right side and assists him as necessary. (174).
- ✘ The Deacon may lead the penitential tropes when the third form of the penitential act is used. (Roman Missal #6 Order of Mass)

Liturgy of the Word

- ✘ During the singing of the *Alleluia* or other chant, if incense is being used, the Deacon ministers to the Priest as he puts incense into the thurible.
- ✘ Then bowing profoundly before the Priest, he asks for the blessing, saying in a low voice: "*Your blessing, Father.*" The Priest blesses him, saying, "*May the Lord be in your heart*" The Deacon signs himself with the sign of the cross and replies, *Amen*.
- ✘ Having bowed to the altar, he then takes up the Book of the Gospels which was placed on it and proceeds to the ambo, carrying the book *slightly elevated*. He is

preceded by a thurifer carrying a smoking thurible and by ministers with lighted candles.

- ✘ At the ambo the Deacon greets the people, with hands joined (hands and arms are not to be extended), saying, *The Lord be with you*. After this, at the words; *A reading from the Holy Gospel*, he signs with his thumb the book and then himself on the forehead, mouth and breast. The Deacon adds no words to the dialogue prescribed by the Roman Missal (for example, “Brothers and Sisters”) at any point before, during, or following the proclamation of the Gospel.
- ✘ He incenses the book with three double swings of the thurible and proclaims the Gospel reading. Remember to bow before and after incensation.
- ✘ When this is done, he acclaims, **without elevating** the *Book of the Gospels*: "*The Gospel of the Lord*," to which all respond: "*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ*."
- ✘ He then bows down and venerates the book (do not pick up the Book of Gospels) with a kiss saying quietly the formula *Per evangelica dicta (Through the words of the gospel may our sins be wiped away)*. If the deacon is not the homilist, he then returns to his chair
- ✘ When the Deacon is assisting the Bishop, he carries the Book of the Gospels (OPENED) to be venerated by the Bishop. The Deacon **DOES NOT** kiss the Book.
- ✘ Then the Deacon carries the Book of the Gospels to the side table or another dignified and appropriate place (175).
- ✘ If there is no other qualified reader(s) present, then the deacon may deliver the other readings as well (176). However, every effort should be made to insure the presence of lectors for the celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy.
- ✘ After the introduction by the Priest, it is the Deacon himself who announces the intentions of the Universal Prayer, usually from the ambo. (177). If announcing the Universal Prayer from the ambo remain there while the priest celebrant concludes the Intercessions with a prayer.
 - The Priest or Bishop opens and closes the General Intercession. The norm in the General Instruction is that when a Deacon is present, the Deacon – not the lector – is to lead the assembly in praying the general intercessions. Obviously there may be some impediments such as a lack of familiarity with language (bi-lingual multi-lingual celebration) that might make it wise for the presiding Priest to ask the lector to read the General Intercessions. But this is an exception and not to be confused with the norms in both the revised Roman Missal and in the revised General Instruction of the Roman Missal.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- ✘ After the Universal Prayer, while the Priest remains at the chair, the Deacon prepares the altar, assisted by the acolyte, but it is the Deacon's place to take care of the sacred vessels himself. He also assists the Priest in receiving the people's gifts.
 - Gestures of the Deacon should be simple and not distracting.
 - The corporal must be carefully opened facing upward as the altar is prepared. It must never be flung open carelessly since it may contain Eucharistic particles. If there is a cross embroidered on one of the outer center squares, move the corporal around (**do NOT lift it up**), so that the cross is nearest to you.
- ✘ He also sets out the chalices to be used for distribution of the Precious Blood to the faithful on a separate corporal, and fills them at this time, unless they have come to the altar already filled.
- ✘ After having received the gifts from the people the deacon goes to the altar with the priest.
- ✘ Neither the paten with the priest's host nor the principal chalice are to be placed on the central corporal. He hands the Priest the paten with the bread to be consecrated, pours wine and a little water into the (main) chalice only¹ saying inaudibly: "*By the mystery of this water and wine...*" then hands the chalice to the priest.
- ✘ If incense is used, the Deacon assists the priest with the incensation of the gifts, the cross and the altar; afterward he, or the acolyte, incenses the priest and the people (178). Three double swings of the thurible are used to incense the priest. If there are concelebrating priests, these too, are incensed with three double swings. Before incensing the people (preferably from a place proximate to them), it may be necessary to gesture simply for them to stand. They, too, receive three double swings of the thurible. Before and after incensing the priest(s) or people, the deacon **bows** to them.
- ✘ During the Eucharistic Prayer, the Deacon stands near but slightly behind him, so that when necessary, he may assist the priest with the chalice or the Roman Missal.
- ✘ As a general rule, from the epiclesis until the elevation of the chalice the deacon usually remains kneeling.
 - Deacons need to note that the timing of their kneeling is different from the rest of the worshipping assembly. The deacon kneels from the time of the epiclesis- when the priest extends his hands over the gifts of bread and wine calling for the Holy Spirit – until the time "when the chalice is shown" which would be after the consecration. Deacons need to carefully

¹ Ceremonies of the Modern Roman Rite #395

time their standing after the consecration so as not to confuse the worshipping assembly. Deacons should remain kneeling (if able) through the anamnesis and then rise gradually. While in a kneeling position, the Deacon DOES NOT BOW since they are already in a posture of reverence. If you are unable to kneel, you should bow at the epiclesis and when the celebrant genuflects at the elevations.

- When there is more than one deacon serving, for uniformity at the altar, they should both either kneel or both stand.

- ✘ At the concluding doxology of the Eucharistic Prayer, the Deacon stands next to the Priest, and the Priest (or Bishop) will hand him the chalice (do not pick it up from the altar unless directed to do so), he elevates the chalice as the Priest raises the paten with the Eucharistic bread, until the people have responded with the acclamation *Amen* (180) and then hands it back to the Priest (or places it on the corporal).

- ✘ After the Priest has said the prayer for The Rite of Peace and the greeting "*The peace of the Lord be with you always.*" and the people have made the response "*And with your spirit,*" the Deacon says the invitation to the Sign of Peace. **With hands joined**, he faces the people and says, "***Let us offer each other the sign of peace***" (NOTHING MORE, NOTHING LESS). He himself receives the sign of peace from the Priest and may offer it to the other ministers near him (181).

- ✘ When the distribution of Communion is over:
 - The Deacon returns to the altar with the Priest, collects the fragments, reposes the Blessed Sacrament, and then carries the chalice and other sacred vessels to the credence table, where he purifies them and arranges them as usual, while the Priest returns to the chair.
 - Standing at the altar (but not in the center), the Deacon immediately and reverently consumes all of the Blood of Christ that remains, assisted, if the case requires, by other Deacons and Priests. (182).
 - Please note: the Deacon is at the altar with the Priest to collect fragments and possibly consume what remains of the Precious Blood, but when the Priest returns to the chair, the Deacon carries the sacred vessels to the credence table to purify.

- ✘ It is also permitted to leave vessels needing to be purified on a corporal, suitably covered, on the credence table, and to purify them immediately after Mass, following the Dismissal of the people. Should circumstances dictate, purifications should be done after the final blessing, the deacon(s) will immediately attend to the Sacred Vessels after the dismissal and not process out and greet the faithful.

Concluding Rite

- ✘ Once the Prayer after Communion has been said, the Deacon makes brief

announcements to the people, if indeed any need to be made, unless the Priest prefers to do this himself. (184).

- ✘ If a Prayer over the People or a formula of Solemn Blessing is used, the Deacon says, "*Bow down for the blessing.*" (Nothing more, nothing less)

- ✘ After the priest's blessing, the deacon, with hands joined and facing the people, dismisses them, saying **one** of the following: (DO NOT ADD ANY WORDS TO THE DISMISSAL OR COMBINE THE DISMISSALS)
 - "Go forth. The Mass is ended."
 - "Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord"
 - "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life"
 - "Go in peace"

- ✘ Together with the Priest, the Deacon venerates the altar with a kiss, makes a profound bow, (4) and leaves in the manner prescribed for the entrance procession (186).

All numbers listed are from the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) unless otherwise noted.

When serving with Bishop Fabre-Jeune

1. Proper dress for the deacon should be dress pants, optional gray clerical shirt, dress shoes.

2. During the entrance procession, when carrying the Book of Gospels, walk directly behind the cross and acolytes. If not carrying the Book of the Gospels, the deacon(s) walk directly in front of the Bishop.

3. If incense is used, assist the thurifer and accompany the bishop when he incenses the altar.

4. Take your **seat** on the right side of the Bishop, if there are two deacons; Deacon of the Word is at his right, Deacon of the Eucharist to his left. This will be your proper seated position throughout the liturgy, do not switch seats after Communion.

5. During the Alleluia, approach the Bishop (after he blesses the incense, if used) and make a profound bow stating, "Your blessing FATHER".

6. If you are deacon at a bilingual mass, the Gospel is **ONLY** to be proclaimed in English.

7. At the conclusion of the Gospel, **DO NOT** reverence the Book, rather present the Book of the Gospels (opened) to the Bishop, he will reverence the Book, do not place the book back on the altar.

8. After the Creed (if required), announce the Prayers of the Faithful at the ambo or other suitable place.
9. After the Prayers of the Faithful, the Deacon of the Word duties are completed, the Deacon of the Eucharist will prepare the altar placing the corporal, chalice etc. upon the altar.
10. Bishop does not use a book stand, place the Roman Missal directly in the center of the altar.
11. The deacon(s) will assist with receiving the gifts from the faithful, Bishop will approach the altar from the front and bow, he will then proceed to the front of the nave to receive the gifts, he will take the paten and cruet of wine and turn around facing the altar at which time he will elevate the gifts, then hand them off to the deacon(s) or servers.
12. The deacon of the Eucharist will hand the paten to the Bishop, prepare his chalice and hand it to him, and assist, if necessary, with incense.
13. At the altar, the deacon of the Eucharist will position himself to the right of the bishop and slightly behind, if there is a deacon of the Word, he will approach the altar after the Prayer over the offerings and position himself to the left of the bishop and slightly behind.
14. During the Lord's prayer do not extend your hands in the orans position. With hands joined the Deacon of the Eucharist says the invitation to the Sign of Peace; "Let us offer each other the sign of peace". Do not add anything to the invitation.
15. For reception of Communion, both deacons should position themselves to the right side of the altar, bishop will distribute the Host then the Cup to the deacons. Assist with Communion if needed.
16. The Deacon of the Eucharist will repose the Blessed Sacrament and remove the vessels from the altar. After placing the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle, genuflect or bow before closing the Tabernacle door.
17. After the Prayer after Communion, if there is a Solemn Blessing the Deacon of the Eucharist says, "Bow down for the Blessing."
18. After the blessing by the Bishop, with hands joined, the Deacon of the Eucharist will dismiss the faithful using ONE of the prescribed formulas for dismissal. DO NOT add any words or combine the dismissals.
19. The deacons along with the Bishop will bow or genuflect at which time you will process out in the same manner as the entrance, the deacons are to walk in **front of the Bishop not by his side or behind him.**

20. Finally, as a reminder: The duties of the Deacon of the Word are completed after the General Intercessions. The Deacon of the Word DOES NOT invite the faithful for the sign of peace, nor does he issue the dismissal.

The Purification of Sacred Vessels by the Deacon at Mass²

In the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*, the role of the deacon has been considerably elaborated. The need for clarifications, however, are still present, and so the Secretariat of Divine Worship would like to offer the following elucidation, admittedly minor, regarding the purification of vessels by deacons.

One of the ways that the Church seeks to avoid confusion between the office of deacon and priest regards the manner of service at or near the altar. Service at the altar has many forms. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM) states that the deacon “ministers at the altar, both as regards the chalice and the book” (no. 171b). GIRM no. 173 states that he may lay the *Book of the Gospels* on the altar and no. 178 states that he “prepares the altar” for the Liturgy of the Eucharist; he may also remove the corporal and sacred vessels from the altar after Communion. Purification of sacred vessels, however, is not something that the deacon does at the altar, but at the credence table, perhaps to avoid the appearance of the deacon doing a ministry alone at the altar that is other than preparatory or in assistance to the priest.

Paragraph 163 of the GIRM, which describes Mass without a deacon, describes the purification by the priest as being done either at the altar or at the credence table: “Upon returning to the altar, the Priest collects the fragments, should any remain, and he stands at the altar or at the credence table and purifies...” This contrasts, however, with the instruction found in paragraph 183, which describes Mass with a deacon:

When the distribution of Communion is over, the Deacon returns to the altar with the Priest, collects the fragments, should any remain, and then carries the chalice and other sacred vessels to the credence table, where he purifies them and arranges them as usual, while the Priest returns to the chair. Nevertheless, it is also permitted to leave vessels needing to be purified on a corporal, suitably covered, on the credence table, and to purify them immediately after Mass, following the Dismissal of the people.

² USCCB Committee on Divine Worship, Volume XLIX, April 2013