



DIOCESE OF AUSTIN

DEACON



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Diaconate Policy Booklet



DIOCESE OF AUSTIN

Continuing Formation of Permanent Deacons

Effective 7-1-2010

I. Introduction

A. The Code of Canon Law (c. 273-289) prescribes in relevant part:

1. Clerics are bound to undertake and fulfill faithfully a function which their ordinary has entrusted to them.
2. Clerics are bound in a special way to pursue holiness since, having been consecrated to God by a new title in the reception of orders, they are dispensers of the mysteries of God in the service of His people.
3. In order to be able to pursue this perfection:
 - a. They are first of all to fulfill faithfully and tirelessly the duties of the pastoral ministry.
 - b. They are to nourish their spiritual life from the two-fold table of sacred scripture and the Eucharist; therefore, priests are earnestly invited to offer the eucharistic sacrifice daily and deacons to participate in its offering daily.
 - c. Priests and deacons aspiring to the presbyterate are obliged to carry out the liturgy of the hours daily according to the proper and approved liturgical books.
 - i. Permanent deacons, however, are to carry out the same to the extent defined by the conference of bishops.
 - d. They are equally bound to make time for spiritual retreats according to the precepts of particular law.

- e. They are urged to engage in mental prayer regularly, to approach the sacrament of penance frequently, to honor the Virgin Mother of God with particular veneration, and to use other common and particular means of sanctification.
 - f. Clerics are to pursue sacred studies and are to strive after that solid doctrine founded in sacred scripture, handed on by their predecessors, and commonly accepted by the Church, as set out especially in the documents of councils and of the Roman Pontiffs.
- B. *The National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States* (USCCB) prescribes in relevant part:
- 1. Deacons are entitled to a period of time each year for continuing education and spiritual retreat.
 - 2. Norms should be established in each diocese regarding suitable length of time for these activities and the manner in which the deacon shall receive financial assistance for his expenses either from the diocese, from the current place of ministerial service, or from a combination of sources.
 - 3. Each diocese is to establish a basic minimum of continuing education hours to be fulfilled on an annual basis by all diocesan deacons in active service (in addition to time allocated for the annual diaconal community retreat).
- C. Accordingly, while finding the active ministry a source of holiness in itself, deacons in the Diocese of Austin shall allot time for reflective activities which foster growth in holiness (e.g., personal prayer, Liturgy of the Hours, retreats, spiritual reading, days of recollection, and consultation with a spiritual director).

II. Annual Retreat

- A. A deacon may fulfill his obligation to attend an annual retreat by attending a retreat given by the Office of Diaconal Ministry in the diocese or through participation in a retreat at a recognized Catholic retreat center.
- B. The deacon is encouraged to attend an annual retreat that is three (3) to five (5) continuous days (72 to 90 hours); but, in no case may the retreat be less than 42 continuous hours (e.g., a retreat that begins Friday evening and concludes Sunday afternoon).

- C. A retreat is a withdrawal from ordinary activities for a period of time to commune with God in prayer and reflection. There are various forms of retreats (e.g., preached, directed, and private). A retreat is not a time for fellowship and social activities. Those leading and participating in retreats should exercise care to focus on prayer and communication with God.

III. Spiritual Direction

- A. A spiritual director is one who assists a person in developing a closer relationship with God and in better discerning the presence of the Holy Spirit in his life and where God is calling him.
 - 1. Spiritual direction is not “spiritual companionship” or a “mentor.”
 - a. Deacons shall be familiar with the differences.
- B. A deacon is required to have a spiritual director with whom he consults regularly.
 - 1. The deacon shall strive to meet with his spiritual director once every four (4) to eight (8) weeks.
- C. A priest or a director who has obtained a certification from an institution acceptable to the bishop may serve as a spiritual director for a deacon.

IV. Continuing Education

- A. In accordance with the Canons cited in the introduction, deacons must constantly form themselves in theological and pastoral continuing education to insure a feeling of self-confidence and adequacy in their ministry and to demonstrate to the Church they serve that they are competent spiritual leaders.
- B. All deacons in the Diocese of Austin shall complete a minimum of 30 hours of continuing education every year (excluding social periods, lunch, breaks, or travel time) as follows:
 - 1. 12 of the required 30 hours must be in actual classroom instruction.
 - 2. The remaining 18 hours must be in actual classroom instruction or self-study hours.
- C. The scope and nature of instruction should pertain to preparation for the deacon’s ministry and to the Church in the areas of service, Word, or sacrament.
 - 1. This would include background for or updating of current ministry, or preparing for future ministry.

- D. Acceptable courses for classroom instruction include, but are not limited to, the following:
1. A certification course such as a national, regional or diocesan course which awards a certificate for completion
 2. A course or conference offered by the Deacon Continuing Education Committee of the Diocese of Austin
 3. College courses in theology, religious studies, or other relevant courses
 4. Courses offered by the Diocesan Institute of Ecclesial Ministry
 5. Courses offered for continuing education of priests
 6. Courses offered by a diocesan ministry (e.g., Office of Pro-Life and Chaste Living, Religious Education, Multi-cultural Ministry, and others)
 7. Instruction time at the annual convocation of deacons
 8. Instruction time at deanery or regional meetings of clergy or deacons
 9. Other courses acceptable to the Director of Diaconal Ministry
- E. Acceptable studies for self-study credit include, but are not limited to, books or recordings related to the subject matter described under *The Deacon at the Mass* § IV.C - IV.D (Page C-44))
- F. Generally, the following items do not qualify for continuing education hours:
1. Travel related to instructional sites
 2. Informal meetings and prayers services
 3. Spiritual direction sessions
 4. Pastoral council, diocesan board, administration, business or committee meetings
 5. Support group functions
 6. Courses not related to ministerial service

V. Annual Convocation of Deacons

- A. Deacons shall attend the annual convocation of deacons as called by the Bishop or the Director of Diaconal Ministry.
- B. The Director of Diaconal Ministry is encouraged to maintain the annual convocation on the same day or days of each calendar year (e.g., the first Saturday in October) and is encouraged to notify deacons of the date for the annual convocation well in advance of the convocation.

VI. Annual Reporting

- A. By a day specified by the Director of Diaconal Ministry, but not later than March 31, each deacon shall submit an annual report specifying their compliance with the requirements for an annual retreat, spiritual direction, and continuing education for the previous calendar year.
- B. Deacons are encouraged to maintain a copy of their annual report.
 - 1. Annual reports are to be made part of the deacon's personnel file.
- C. The Director of Diaconal Ministry may ask for other matters to be submitted in the annual report (e.g., estimated hours of service in various ministries or experiences by the deacon).

VII. Compliance and Exceptions

- A. As specified in this policy, all active deacons must
 - 1. Comply with the annual requirements of a retreat, spiritual direction, and continuing education
 - 2. Attend the deacon convocation
 - 3. Submit an annual report
- B. Retired deacons are not required to fulfill continuing education requirements or submit an annual report; but are encouraged to do so.
- C. Inactive deacons (for whatever reason) are encouraged to comply.
 - 1. If an inactive deacon does not comply, the inactive deacon may be required to obtain additional education or other formation before returning to active status.

- D. The Director of Diaconal Ministry may, in exceptional cases, grant waivers to compliance or submission of an annual report (e.g., extended illness).
- E. Non-compliance with this policy by active deacons
 - 1. Will be reported to the canonical supervisor of the deacon and to the bishop
 - 2. May be grounds for admonishment, suspension of faculties, or other action



DIocese OF AUSTIN

Assignment-Reassignment within the Diocese

I. Definition

- A. It is the Bishop who assigns a deacon to a particular ministry and parish. He normally uses a consultative process; however, he may also personally direct an assignment.
- B. The principal criteria for this assignment are the pastoral needs of the diocese and the local community and the personal qualifications and abilities of the deacon, as discerned in his previous experience and the course of his formation (*Permanent Deacons in the United States: Guidelines on their Formation and Ministry*¹, 116).
- C. The assignment ordinarily will take into account the deacon's family and occupational responsibilities.
- D. Normally, deacons will be assigned to a particular parish.
 - 1. Assignments involving specific ministries to other institutions may also be made in order to foster the ministry of the Church.
- E. All diaconal assignments are made at the discretion of the Bishop of Austin and are made by letter personally signed by him.
- F. The Director of Diaconal Ministry is the Bishop's representative for coordinating and recommending all assignment actions with input from the Deacon Personnel Committee.

II. Initial Assignment

The initial assignment of a newly ordained deacon will depend on the needs of the diocese and the abilities of the deacon.

¹ Hereafter PDUS

III. Reassignment

Sometimes it is necessary for assignments to be changed because of the needs of the diocese, the needs of the deacon, the needs of the parish, or personal reasons. The process for reassignment is as follows:

- A. The deacon or his pastor or other canonical supervisor will contact the Director of Diaconal Ministry and discuss the need for reassignment with him.
 - 1. If there is a conflict with the director, the deacon may contact the chancellor or the vicar general of the diocese or seek redress per [Deacon Personnel Committee § IV.E](#) (page C-27)
- B. The director will gather pertinent information regarding the reassignment by talking to the deacon, pastors, and others who may be involved.
- C. The director will then present to the Deacon Personnel Committee to discuss and make a recommendation to the Bishop.
 - 1. The Director of Diaconal Ministry will ensure that both pastors support any reassignment before making a recommendation to the Bishop.
- D. Once the recommendation has been made to the Bishop, he will decide if a reassignment is beneficial and write a letter making the reassignment to the deacon and both pastors.

IV. Assignment of deacons into Diocese of Austin from Another Diocese

A deacon moving into the diocese from another diocese will establish his residence and then contact the Director of Diaconal Ministry to apply for ministry in the diocese and a parish.

- A. In order to receive an assignment, the deacon must receive endorsement from the Bishop and Director of the Diaconate Office of his former diocese.
- B. No assignment will be made without the review and recommendation of the Deacon Personnel Committee and prior coordination and approval of the pastor or other canonical supervisor.
- C. The recommendation of the Director of Diaconal Ministry and the Deacon Personnel Committee is forwarded to the Bishop and he makes the decision on the assignment.

- V. Excardination (the releasing of a cleric from the jurisdiction of his ordinary)
Incardination (The embracing of a cleric into the jurisdiction of a new ordinary)
- A. When a deacon is moving permanently outside the juridical boundaries of the diocese, he should notify the Director of Diaconal Ministry.
 - B. After he settles into the new diocese, he may begin the process of incardination into the new diocese.
 - C. If the move is permanent and, upon the agreement of the Bishops of both dioceses, the excardination/incardination can be completed.



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Written Ministry Agreement

- I. The importance of a written agreement between a deacon and his pastor or canonical supervisor cannot be overemphasized.

“It is very important that the particular ministry assignment to a deacon by his Bishop be very clearly spelled out in a written document. It should always contain clear delineation of responsibilities, that is, of the expectations of the diocese and of the particular community. Such job descriptions will go far to prevent misunderstandings and disappointments arising among the deacons themselves or other members of the Church. This mission should be regularly evaluated and reviewed and may be revised when changes in church needs or in the development of the deacon himself suggest it.” (PDUS, 117)

- II. It is incumbent on pastors/supervisors and deacons to have a current Diaconal Ministry Agreement that specifies the deacon’s responsibilities and duties within the parish or other institution.
- III. In the Diocese of Austin, the Ministry Agreement is reviewed annually and updated, as needed, at the time of the deacon’s annual evaluation and review of ministry.
- IV. In negotiating an agreement, it is important that a married deacon’s spouse be consulted, since diaconal ministry inevitably affects the wife and children.
- V. There are five conditions that require a written ministry agreement:
- A. Upon ordination
 - B. Upon reassignment
 - C. Upon transfer into the Diocese of Austin from another diocese
 - D. When a new pastor/supervisor is assigned to the parish or institution
 - E. When requested by the deacon or the pastor/supervisor.



DIocese OF AUSTIN

Remuneration, Support, and Reimbursement of Expenses to Permanent Deacons

Adopted by Bishop Vásquez on December 21, 2010

I. Introduction

A. The *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States* provides, in relevant part:

1. By ordination, deacons are members of the clergy
2. Most permanent deacons, married or celibate, have secular employment and do not engage exclusively in specific church-related ministries
3. The combination of an ordained minister with a secular occupation and personal and family obligations can be a great strength, opportunity, and witness to the laity on how they too might integrate their baptismal call and state in life in living their Christian faith in society
4. Permanent deacons are to take care of their own and their family's needs using income derived from their full-time employment by the diocese, parish, or secular profession or, if not employed, by other means such as retirement income or investments.
 - a. Provided, in a situation of need, the Church ought to assist the deacon and his family in charity.

B. Canon 281.3 provides:

1. Deacons who devote themselves completely to ecclesiastical ministry deserve remuneration
2. Deacons who receive remuneration in a civil profession (current or retired) are to take care of their own needs from the incomes derived from their profession.

- C. The Diocese of Austin recognizes the sacrifices that permanent deacons make in fulfilling their ordination promises. Therefore, to assure equity in matters related to remuneration and reimbursement of expenses, permanent deacons and parishes shall adhere to this chapter concerning such matters.

II. Remuneration for Diaconal Ministry and Remuneration for Employment

- A. A deacon who is assigned to a parish is not compensated for his diaconal ministry.
1. In accordance with Paragraphs **IV** and **V** of this section (Page C-15), a parish should provide a sufficient budget for the deacon to perform his diaconal ministry.
- B. Gifts or fees may not be required or encouraged from the faithful for:
1. The preparation, administration, or receipt of a Sacrament
 2. A deacon to lead or participate in a prayer service, blessing, or liturgy
- Fees or contributions for the use of facilities or educational materials are addressed in other sections of the diocesan pastoral manual.
- C. A deacon may receive a gift from those to whom he administers the sacraments or for whom he leads in prayer (commonly known as “stole fees”) if the deacon:
1. Does not suggest or specify a particular amount for such a gift
 2. Clarifies with the donor as to whether the gift is to be given to the deacon or to the parish
 3. Complies with any other parish policies concerning such gifts
- D. A deacon may be employed by a parish or the diocese to fill a position that is typically held by paid-staff (for example, parish business administrator, religious education director, music director, etc.).
1. Permanent deacons who are employed by the diocese, parish, or agency are to receive remuneration commensurate with the salaries and benefits provided to the lay staff for that particular position.
 2. A deacon may voluntarily agree to receive less remuneration if the deacon has other means sufficient for the care of his own needs and the needs of his family.

III. Insurance and Retirement

- A. To provide for their own upkeep, every permanent deacon is obliged to satisfy the legal requirements for Social Security benefits or a comparable program.
- B. Deacons are encouraged to and should seek out financial guidance concerning retirement savings and income, insurance (health, life, and disability), and overall financial planning.

IV. Reimbursement of Expenses

- A. Permanent deacons are to be reimbursed for legitimate expenses incurred in their ministry, including, but not limited to:
 - 1. Mileage, if necessary for the deacon to fulfill his ministerial obligations and the mileage expense is significant
 - 2. Supplies directly related to ministerial functions
 - 3. Travel expenses (for example, air fare, mileage, food and lodging) if such travel is necessary for the deacon to fulfill his ministerial obligations
- B. The deacon should ascertain from his pastor the method for reimbursement or expenses and should obtain prior approval for such expenditures.

V. Expenses for the Deacon's Annual Retreat and Continuing Education

- A. The deacon is obliged to meet certain continuing formation requirements as specified in this pastoral manual or otherwise required by the bishop (for example, an annual retreat and continuing education).
 - 1. A deacon's wife is, many times, asked to attend such events.
- B. The parish or place at which the deacon serves is obliged to provide financial assistance to the deacon to meet his retreat and continuing formation obligations.
 - 1. A parish should offer to pay the reasonable costs associated with the retreat and continuing formation of a deacon and is encouraged to offer to pay such expenses for the deacon's wife.
 - 2. The deacon may decline such assistance if he is able to sufficiently provide for the care of his own needs and the needs of his family.



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Faculties for Deacons in the Diocese of Austin

In accordance with the duties of the deacon as described in the 1983 Code of Canon Law and the liturgical books, the following faculties are granted to the deacons of the Diocese of Austin to be exercised subject to the pastor to whom each is assigned. The faculties are given individually and signed by the Bishop and notarized by the chancellor.

I. Baptism

To administer Baptism solemnly to persons under the age of seven (7)¹

II. Eucharist

1. To distribute the Body and Blood of Christ at Mass
2. To conduct the rite of administration of holy Communion outside of Mass
3. To conduct the rite of administration of viaticum and holy Communion to the sick
 - A. *Nota bene:* Care must be taken that the recipients are given the opportunity to receive the sacraments of penance and anointing of the sick, if they so desire.
4. To impart Eucharistic Benediction
5. To exercise the office of deacon in liturgical celebrations²
6. To dispense, in individual cases and for a just reason, from the Eucharistic abstinence³

¹ Canon 866 provides that anyone over the age of seven (7) should be immediately confirmed after the reception of baptism. This is to be done by the minister who confers baptism. Since a deacon cannot administer confirmation, he cannot baptize an adult except in danger of death. Persons seven (7) years old and older will be baptized by a priest and confirmed by him as part of the same ceremony.

² In liturgical celebrations, the deacon must wear at least the alb and stole. On more solemn and festive occasions he should wear the dalmatic over the stole.

III. Preaching

- A. To deliver the homily at Mass
- B. To preach at other religious services⁴

IV. Scripture

- A. To proclaim the Gospel at Mass
- B. To conduct Scripture services

V. Matrimony

- A. To administer the Order of Celebrating Matrimony without Mass within the boundaries of the parish to which he is assigned by the Bishop.⁵
- B. When assisting at a marriage to dispense from all impediments to marriage that may be dispensed by the local ordinary, when everything has been prepared for the marriage and when the marriage cannot be delayed without probable danger of grave harm until the dispensation can be obtained from the competent authority.
 - 1. Such dispensations must be reported to the chancery within three (3) days.⁶

³ Canon 919, § 1 requires that anyone receiving the Eucharist abstain for at least one hour before holy Communion from all food and drink, except water and medicine. This faculty allows the deacon to dispense from this Eucharistic abstinence in individual cases and for a just cause.

⁴ The deacon may deliver the homily and preach anywhere in the world, with the permission of the person in charge of the church or chapel, unless the Bishop sees fit to limit or deny permissions. (c. 764)

⁵ A marriage performed by a deacon, outside of his assigned parish, is invalid unless the pastor or parochial vicar of the place of marriage has explicitly delegated the deacon for the specific marriage. Since this faculty gives a deacon general delegation for marriages within the parish to which a deacon is assigned, a deacon may delegate an outside priest or deacon to officiate at a marriage within the territory of the parish.

⁶ Canon 1080, § 1 says that whenever an impediment is discovered after everything is prepared for the wedding and the marriage cannot be delayed without the probable danger of grave harm until a dispensation is obtained from a competent authority, the local ordinary may dispense from all impediments of ecclesiastical origin except the impediment arising from orders and the impediment coming from a public perpetual vow of chastity in a religious institute of pontifical right. Moreover, in occult cases and in danger of death, these same ecclesiastical impediments may be dispensed by a minister (c. 1079, § 2, 3). This includes a deacon who is properly delegated for the marriage.

- C. To administer the nuptial blessing outside of Mass
- D. To administer the oath and complete the premarital investigation
- E. To initiate the process for convalidation of marriages, for declarations of nullity, and/or for the dissolutions of the bond of marriage

VI. Funerals

- A. To conduct vigil services as appropriate at wakes
- B. To conduct the Funeral Service without the Mass
- C. To accompany the body from the funeral home to the church
- D. To conduct the rite of final commendation when it does not immediately follow the funeral Mass
- E. To lead the prayers at the cemetery
- F. To allow church funeral rites at the parish to which he is assigned for an unbaptized child if the parents intended to have the child baptized.⁷
- G. To allow church funeral rites at the parish to which he is assigned for a baptized person belonging to a non-Catholic church or ecclesial community provided this is not clearly contrary to the wishes of the deceased and provided a minister of the faith of the deceased is not available.⁸

This faculty gives to those able to assist at marriages the ability to dispense from all ecclesiastical impediments which may be dispensed by the local ordinary when everything is prepared for the wedding and the marriage cannot be delayed without probable danger of grave harm until the dispensation can be obtained from the competent authority. It is an extension of the instances mentioned in Canon 1080, § 1 inasmuch as it permits a dispensation from non-occult, ecclesiastical law impediments from which the local ordinary can dispense.

⁷ Canon 1183, § 2 states that the local ordinary may allow church funeral rites to be celebrated for children whose parents intended to have them baptized but who died before baptism. This faculty gives the ability to permit such funerals to the deacons assigned to a parish.

⁸ Canon 1183, § 3 says that, in accordance with the prudent judgment of the local ordinary and provided that the deceased's own minister is unavailable, a baptized person belonging to a non-Catholic church or ecclesial community may be given funeral rite unless it is clear that such is against his or her wishes. This faculty gives the ability to allow such funerals to deacons assigned to a parish, who must first make a prudent judgment concerning the matter.

VII. Liturgy of the Hours

- A. *The National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States* provides “permanent deacons are required to include as part of their daily prayer those parts of the Liturgy of the Hours known as Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer” (90).
- B. Although permanent deacons are not bound by the universal church law to say the whole of the Liturgy of the Hours every day, permanent deacons should not hold themselves lightly excused from the obligation they have to recite morning and evening prayer.
- C. The National Directory states that “whenever possible they (deacons) should lead those prayers (Morning and Evening Prayer) with the community to whom they have been assigned to minister.”
- D. It is the policy of the Diocese of Austin that all deacons have the faculty of dispensing themselves from the divine office when family or work duties make it difficult to pray the Liturgy of the Hours.

VIII. Other

- A. To dispense, in individual cases and for a just reason, from the obligation of observing a day of precept or a day of penance or to commute the obligation into other pious works.
 - 1. This faculty may be exercised on behalf of a parishioner or a person visiting within the boundaries of the parish to which the deacon is assigned.⁹
- B. To bestow blessings according to the rubrics of the Roman Ritual and the Book of Blessings.

⁹ Canon 1245 gives the pastor the ability, for a just cause and according to the prescriptions of the diocesan Bishop, to dispense from the obligation of observing a day of precept or a day of penance or to commute the obligation into some other work. This power can be exercised on behalf of the pastor’s parishioners and those visiting within the confines of the parish (cf. c. 91). This faculty gives the deacons assigned to a parish the same ability to dispense or commute. This power can be exercised on behalf of parishioners and persons visiting within the confines of the parish to which the deacon is assigned.

Nota bene: A deacon assigned to a parish should consult and work with the pastor before granting any dispensations or providing funeral rites for a non-Catholic.



DIocese OF AUSTIN

Appropriate Attire and Title for Permanent Deacons

I. Introduction

- A. Article 89 of the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States* states:

The Code of Canon Law does not oblige permanent deacons to wear an ecclesiastical garb. Further, because they are prominent and active in secular professions and society, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops specifies that permanent deacons should resemble the lay faithful in dress and matters of lifestyle. Each diocesan Bishop should, however, determine and promulgate any exceptions to this law, as well as specify the appropriate clerical attire that is to be worn.

- B. Article 88 states:

While various forms of address have emerged with regard to deacons, the Congregation for the Clergy has determined that in all forms of address for permanent deacons, the appropriate title is “deacon.”

- C. It is the policy of the Diocese of Austin that deacons are to aspire to wear dignified and modest clothing in their daily lives.
- D. It is also the policy of the Diocese of Austin that the term “deacon” is the appropriate title when formally addressing the deacon.

II. Attire

- A. The deacon’s attire should be appropriate for his field of work.
- B. When in public (at parish, social or other events), the deacon should wear clothing that is neat, clean, modest, dignified, and appropriate to the occasion.

- C. When choosing appropriate clothing, the deacon should recall any effect clothing expressing certain positions or affiliations may have on others. For example, the deacon should pay particular attention to attire that indicates a preference for a particular political candidate, party, or position; or may make a statement that is pastorally insensitive.
- D. Generally, the deacon does not wear clerical attire (the Roman collar or cassock).
1. If a deacon needs to wear clerical attire for jail or prison ministry, the deacon should first seek written permission from the Bishop.
- E. The vestment at Mass appropriate to the deacon is the dalmatic (of appropriate liturgical color) worn over the alb and stole.
1. The deacon should wear the dalmatic at least on Sundays and major occasions.
 2. If a dalmatic, which matches (or appears appropriate with) the presider's chasuble, is not available, the deacon may wear an alb and stole of appropriate liturgical color.
 3. The stole is not worn outside the dalmatic.
 4. For liturgies other than Mass, the appropriate attire for the deacon is as follows:
 - a. Communion Service: alb and stole (dalmatic is optional)
 - b. Baptism: alb and stole (cope is optional)
 - c. Wedding with Mass: the dalmatic is preferred, but an alb and stole is also appropriate
 - d. Wedding without Mass: alb and stole (dalmatic is optional; cope is optional)
 - e. Funeral Mass: the dalmatic is preferred, but an alb and stole is also appropriate
 - f. Funeral Service: alb and stole (whether service is in a sacred place or at a funeral home); cope is optional if in a sacred place
 - g. Graveside Service: alb and stole

- h. Funeral Vigil Service:
 - i. Alb and stole if the service is in a sacred place
 - ii. If the service is at a funeral home, the appropriate attire is the alb and stole or coat and tie at the deacon's option
- i. Ecumenical or Inter-Faith Prayer Service: coat and tie (for example, prayer service for the deceased who was not Catholic)
- j. Adoration: alb and stole
- k. Benediction: alb and stole with humeral veil; the cope is preferred but optional

III. Title

- A. The title for a Deacon is: "Deacon Your Name," or "Your Name, Deacon"
- B. A deacon should be addressed in writing as "Deacon John Jones" or "Mr. John Jones, Deacon" and verbally as "Deacon Jones."



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Use of Oil in Praying with the Sick

No deacon may anoint with blessed oil or any other oil in praying for the sick. The possibility exists for confusion of the prayer with the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. The person being prayed with may fully understand that the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is not being administered but others present or who hear of the incident may not be aware of the distinction. Therefore, to avoid any confusion deacons are prohibited from using any oil or blessed oil when praying with the sick.



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Presiding at Holy Communion Outside of Mass

- I. Generally, deacons maintain the faculty to conduct the rite of administration of holy Communion outside of Mass.
- II. When presiding at a communion service, the deacon must use the following texts and abide the rubrics in such texts:
 - A. For communion services on a Sunday in English use “Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest” 2012 edition.
 - B. For communion services on a Sunday in Spanish use “Sunday Celebrations in Absence of a Priest” 2007 Bilingual Edition.
 - C. For communion services on a weekday in English use “Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass” 1976 Edition.
- III. The Office of Diaconal Ministry maintains a compilation of frequently asked questions related to communion services at which deacons preside, which provides guidance to deacons.
- IV. The Eucharistic Prayer is not recited in a communion service. The Eucharistic Prayer is a priestly prayer and its recitation by persons other than priests is forbidden by Canon 907.
- V. A communion service is not offered in lieu of a Mass nor does attendance at a communion service fulfill one’s obligation to observe a day of precept (namely, Sunday Mass). The deacon must exercise careful attention to avoid confusion on the part of the faithful in this respect.



DIOCESE OF AUSTIN

Deacon Personnel Committee

I. Purpose

- A. The Deacon Personnel Committee exists to assist the Bishop in serving the pastoral needs of the diocese through the analysis and assessment of diaconal personnel matters and the assignments of deacons.
- B. The committee aims to increase the efficiency and satisfaction of the deacons in their ministries, to facilitate the development of their personal talents, and to employ their experience in diocesan assignments.
- C. The committee is accountable to the Bishop.

II. Composition

- A. The Deacon Personnel Committee is composed of four members: two priests and two deacons, appointed by the Bishop and the Director of Diaconal Ministry.
- B. The chairman of the committee is the Director of Diaconal Ministry.

III. Responsibilities

- A. The committee is directly responsible to the Bishop.
 - 1. The Director of Diaconal Ministry represents the Bishop on the committee.
 - 2. The committee makes recommendations to the Bishop regarding assignments and will assist the Director of Diaconal Ministry in resolving problems that arise relating to deacons.
- B. The Bishop can make appointments without consulting the personnel committee.
 - 1. Deacons may approach the Bishop personally regarding assignments.

- C. All members of the committee are bound to confidentiality regarding matters discussed at meetings.
 - 1. This confidentiality continues even after a member leaves the committee.
- D. The committee recommends new ministries or variations in ministry that may utilize the special talents and experience of deacons, especially to meet the ministerial concerns of the poor.
- E. A pastor, canonical supervisor, or deacon may ask for reassignment of the deacon.
 - 1. All requests for reassignment must be sent to the Director of Diaconal Ministry.

IV. Procedures

- A. The director of Diaconal Ministries is responsible for directing the activities of the committee and assuring that all issues are brought to the committee and resolved.
- B. When considering the assignment or reassignment of deacons, the committee will make every attempt to assign the deacon to either his home parish or as close to his home as possible.
- C. Prior to any decisions being made for assignment or reassignment, the director of Diaconal Ministry will contact the pastor or supervisor of the ministry concerned to get approval of the proposed assignment.
- D. The committee will make recommendations to the director of Diaconal Ministry who will then present it to the Bishop.
 - 1. The Bishop will make the final decision and no deacon may begin an assignment until he has received the canonical letter of appointment from the Bishop.
- E. Deacons with grievances that cannot be resolved through the director of Diaconal Ministry or other members of the committee may appeal to the chancellor of the diocese (or the vicar general if the chancellor is the Director of Diaconal Ministry) who will select an ombudsman from among several deacons who have been approved by the Bishop to serve as an advocate for the aggrieved deacon.
 - 1. This process is intended to provide a means of resolving problems in which the director of Diaconal Ministry or members of the Personnel Committee are parties to the issue or their personnel actions are not acceptable to the deacon.
 - 2. Use of this process should be reserved for serious matters.



DIocese OF AUSTIN

Statuses of Permanent Deacons

Adopted by Bishop Vasquez on June 17, 2011

I. Statuses, Generally

- A. Each permanent deacon in the Diocese of Austin is classified in one of the following statuses:
1. Active
 2. Retirement
 3. Leave of absence
 4. Suspended (aka as inactive)
 5. Dismissed from the clerical state (commonly referred to as laicized)

II. Active Status

- A. Deacons who enjoy active status retain faculties as specified in this pastoral manual, whether in their entirety or as may be limited by the bishop, and shall abide by:
1. Their ordination promises
 2. Their canonical obligations
 3. Their obligations specified in this pastoral manual
 4. Lawful instructions from the bishop or director of diaconal ministry

- B. Deacons incardinated in this diocese who are actively engaged in diaconal ministry in another diocese with permission of both bishops:
1. Are active
 2. Must comply with the requirements of the diocese in which they serve (items under [Status of Permanent Deacons § II.A: Active Status](#) (Page 28))
 3. Must submit an annual written statement to the director of diaconal ministry of this diocese stating that they are in compliance with the requirements of the diocese in which they serve
- C. Deacons incardinated in a diocese other than this diocese who are actively engaged in diaconal ministry in this diocese with permission of both bishops:
1. Are active
 2. Must comply with the requirements under [Status of Permanent Deacons § II.A: Active Status](#) (Page 28)

III. Retirement Status

A. Normal Age of Retirement

1. Upon reaching the age of 75, the deacon, as a matter of courtesy, should inform the bishop, through the director of diaconal ministry, that he has reached the age of 75.
2. When a deacon reaches the age of 75, the deacon is automatically retired from active ministry unless he submits a written request to continue in active diaconal ministry to the bishop.
 - a. A request by a deacon older than 75 to continue in active ministry should state that the deacon has consulted with his pastor or canonical supervisor and that the pastor or canonical supervisor consents to and supports the request.
 - b. If the pastor or the canonical supervisor does not support the request, the deacon may, nonetheless, submit the request, but should note the dissent.
3. The deacon who is older than 75 must annually renew his request to continue in active diaconal ministry on or before his birthday.
 - a. If the request to continue in active diaconal ministry is not renewed each year, the deacon will be placed on retired status.

4. If the bishop grants a deacon over the age of 75 the right to continue in active diaconal ministry, the deacon is placed on active status and shall abide by § II.A: *Active Status* (Page 28) of this policy.

B. Early Retirement

1. A deacon may submit a written request to the bishop to retire from active ministry before reaching the age of 75 if the sum of the deacon's age and the number of years he served in active diaconal ministry equals or exceeds 85 (aka, the rule of 85).
2. A request for early retirement should state that the deacon has consulted with his pastor or canonical supervisor and that the pastor or canonical supervisor consents to and supports the request.
3. If the pastor or the canonical supervisor does not support the request, the deacon may, nonetheless, submit the request, but should note the dissent.
4. The deacon submitting a request for early retirement should consider the impact of his retirement on the diocese, the parish, and, most importantly, the faithful.
5. If a deacon does not satisfy the rule of 85, the deacon is not eligible for early retirement, but may request a leave of absence.

C. Effect of Retirement

1. A deacon who is on retired status (normal or early) retains faculties as a deacon.
2. A retired deacon is not given a canonical assignment, but may engage in diaconal ministry occasionally as his schedule and health permit provided, however, that the deacon first obtains the permission of the pastor(s) of the parish(es) in whose jurisdiction(s) the occasional ministry takes place.
3. A retired deacon is not required to attend the annual deacon convocation or continuing education events sponsored by the office of diaconal ministry, but shall be invited to, encouraged to attend, and is welcome at all such events.
4. A retired deacon is not obligated to attend an annual retreat or be in spiritual direction, but is encouraged to do so.
5. A retired deacon is not obligated to file an annual continuing formation report or enter into an annual ministry agreement, but may do so at his discretion.

6. The retired deacon should keep in mind the purpose of his retirement and, therefore, engage only in occasional or limited ministry.
7. A retired deacon shall abide by any instructions from the bishop or the director of diaconal ministry concerning ministry or requests for information.

IV. Leave of Absence

- A. A leave of absence is permission granted by the bishop by which a permanent deacon is released from certain obligations as a deacon for a stated period of time (usually not more than one year).
- B. A request for a leave of absence may be initiated by the deacon, the deacon's wife, the deacon's canonical supervisor (pastor), the director of diaconal ministry, the vicar general, or the bishop.
 1. A request for a leave of absence shall specify the reasons for the request, which include, but are not limited to, health conditions, financial conditions, familial demands or circumstances, or personal conditions.
 2. Reasons for requesting a leave of absence must be conditions or situations that significantly impact the deacon's ability to fulfill his diaconal obligations.
- C. A request for a leave of absence must be:
 1. In writing
 2. Made by a person listed under § IV.B above
 3. Specify the reasons for the request
 4. Request a specific duration for the leave of absence
 5. Identify the persons with whom the requestor has consulted (for example, the deacon's pastor, the deacon's wife, and the director of diaconal ministry)
- D. Upon receipt of the written request for the leave of absence, the bishop may grant the request, deny the request, or seek additional consultation.

E. A request to return to active or retired status may be initiated by a person listed under § IV.B above (Page C-31).

1. The bishop, in his discretion, may require the deacon returning to active or retired status after a leave of absence to complete certain requirements as a condition to returning to active or retired status (for example, a retreat, entering spiritual direction, signing a new ministry agreement, or certain education).

F. Effect of Leave of Absence

1. While on a leave of absence, a deacon does not maintain faculties to engage in diaconal ministry.
2. While on a leave of absence the deacon may not baptize, witness marriages, preach, function as a minister of Holy Communion, or engage in any liturgical function.
 - a. Exceptions may be granted by the bishop after receiving a request for a specific event.
3. A deacon on a leave of absence is not required to attend the annual deacon convocation or continuing education events sponsored by the office of diaconal ministry, but shall be invited to, encouraged to attend, and is welcome at all such events.
4. A deacon on a leave of absence should fulfill his canonical obligation concerning an annual retreat and is encouraged to remain in spiritual direction.
5. A deacon on a leave of absence is not obligated to file an annual continuing formation report, but may do so at his discretion.
6. A deacon on a leave of absence does not enter into an annual ministry agreement.
7. A deacon on a leave of absence shall abide by any instructions from the bishop or the director of diaconal ministry concerning his status or requests for information.

V. Suspended or Inactive Status

- A. For significant reasons, the bishop may place a deacon on suspended status, which is also known as inactive status.

B. Effect of Suspended or Inactive Status.

1. A deacon on suspended or inactive status does not maintain faculties to engage in diaconal ministry. The deacon on suspended or inactive status may not baptize, witness marriages, preach, function as a minister of Holy Communion, or engage in any liturgical function.
2. A deacon on suspended or inactive status is encouraged to continue to fulfill his canonical obligation to attend an annual retreat and is encouraged to remain in spiritual direction.
3. A deacon on suspended or inactive status does not file an annual continuing formation report or enter into an annual ministry agreement.
4. A deacon on suspended or inactive status should not attend the annual deacon convocation or continuing education events sponsored by the office of diaconal ministry unless permission is first granted by the bishop, vicar general, or director of diaconal ministry.
5. A deacon on suspended or inactive status shall abide by any instructions from the bishop, the vicar general, or the director of diaconal ministry concerning his status or requests for information.

- C. The bishop, in his discretion, may require the deacon returning to active or retired status after a being placed on suspended or inactive status to complete certain requirements as a condition to returning to active or retired status (for example, a retreat, entering spiritual direction, signing a new ministry agreement, or certain education).

VI. Deacons Dismissed from the Clerical State (Laicized)

- A. A deacon who, for grave reasons, is permanently relieved of his clerical obligations and rights by the Holy See under a canonical procedure is considered to be “dismissed from the clerical state.”
- B. A deacon who is dismissed from the clerical state ceases to retain faculties to engage in diaconal ministry.
1. The deacon who is dismissed from the clerical state may not baptize, witness marriages, preach, function as a minister of Holy Communion, or engage in any liturgical function.
 2. The Holy See may, and typically does, impose additional requirements on the deacon who is dismissed from the clerical state (for example, moving to another parish, not engaging in teaching or liturgical ministries, etc.)

3. The deacon who is dismissed from the clerical state ceases to be a member of the diaconal community.



DIocese OF AUSTIN

Guidelines for the Christian Burial of a Deacon of the Diocese of Austin

The celebration of Christian burial announces the paschal mystery of Christ. Those who in Baptism have become one with the Dead and Risen Christ will pass with him from death to life and be welcomed into the fellowship of the saints in heaven.

The Church celebrates the Eucharistic sacrifice of Christ's Passover from the dead, and offers prayers and petitions for the deceased and those who grieve. In communion with all Christ's members, prayers, which bring spiritual help to some and may bring consoling hope to others.

For those configured into Christ's ministry of service through ordination to the diaconate, these celebrations demonstrate our respect and honor for a "servant" in the "image of Christ." The funeral rites provide the diaconal community and the entire Church with an opportunity to reach out in love to the deceased deacon's family and to his community of service. The death of a deacon is significant, not only in the life of his family but also in the diocese and in his parish. Since a deacon is a special minister of service in the Bishop's name, it is important that the diocese provide procedures to demonstrate this reality.

Deacons should candidly and faithfully share their ideas and desires with their immediate families regarding arrangements for their Christian burial. This will help them recognize death not as a tragic finality, but as the proclamation of the fullness of life, our participation in the victory of Christ. Accordingly, a deacon is asked to complete the *Funeral Planning Form* (Page C-56) within six (6) months after his ordination. This form will be kept on file at the office of the Director of Diaconal Ministry, and should be reviewed by the deacon at least every five (5) years. It is important to understand that the wishes of the deacon as well as the following guidelines are suggestions to assist the widow and family upon his death. It is not the wish of the Office of Diaconal Ministry or the Bishop to do anything contrary to the wishes of the family; family wishes will always have the highest priority in any arrangements. However, the deacon should make sure that his family knows and understands that the liturgy of the Christian burial of a deacon appropriately lies with the office of the Bishop. These guidelines are offered to assist the appropriate individuals with steps to be taken in order that the Diocese of Austin may respect the memory of one of its good servants.

I. Announcement

- A. On the death of a deacon, his family or family representative (such as the local pastor or another deacon at the parish) should notify the Director of the Diaconal Ministry, who will then notify the Bishop, the Director of the Office of Worship, and the Director of Communications.
- B. After funeral arrangements have been established, the entire diaconal community should be notified through appropriate and expedient means.
 - 1. The Director of Diaconal Ministry should also notify the vicar general and the office responsible for sending such notices to priests.

II. General Recommendations

- A. Because a deacon is an ordained minister of the Church, the widow/family in consultation with the Director of Diaconal Ministry or his designee should make the funeral arrangements.
 - 1. The wishes of the family along with the wishes of the deceased deacon should be followed in accord with the *Order of Christian Funerals*¹².
 - 2. Cremation of the deceased deacon's remains is acceptable in accord with the norms of the Church.
 - 3. Deacons may also choose to have their bodies or organs donated to appropriate institutions for research or transplants.
- B. The Director of Diaconal Ministry along with the Director of the Office of Worship should designate a priest or deacon to act as Master of Ceremonies to facilitate all aspects of the liturgical ceremonies: vigil service, Mass of Christian Burial, Memorial Mass (in the case where the body or cremated remains are not present), and committal.
 - 1. The Master of Ceremonies should work closely with the Office of Worship and the pastor in planning the liturgies and keeping the Director of Diaconal Ministry informed if any special needs exist.
 - 2. However, it is appropriate for the family to indicate preferences as to certain matters, including, but not limited to the selection of concelebrants, deacons to assist, scripture readings, lectors, and a homilist.

¹⁰ Hereafter OCF

- C. It is preferred that the vigil service take place at the parish of the deceased deacon's assignment on the evening prior to the funeral liturgy.
1. If possible, the body of the deceased deacon should remain in repose at the parish until the funeral Mass.
 2. If the deceased deacon was retired from Diaconal Ministry, did not have an assignment at the time of his death, or if the Bishop determines otherwise, the vigil service may take place at a different parish or in a funeral home.
 3. Consideration must be made to include all members of the Church.
 4. The vigil service should take place at a time for brother deacons, family, and friends to participate.
- D. The body of the deceased deacon should be clothed according to the wishes of the deceased deacon as described in his *Funeral Planning Form*.
1. If liturgical vestments are chosen (which is customary), it is the responsibility of the Director of Diaconal Ministry or his designee to ensure that the deceased deacon is vested in alb, stole, and/or dalmatic.
 - a. If secular clothes are worn, then the deacon's stole is placed on or near the casket but is not to be placed over the business suit or secular clothing.
 - i. If the deacon's remains are to be cremated this procedure is not applicable.

III. Liturgical Planning

- A. The *Order of Christian Funerals* should be followed for all phases of the funeral liturgies. The deceased deacon's wishes should be utilized by all involved in the funeral planning.
- B. The planning of the rites of the *Order of Christian Funerals* should include the widow or other family members, the Office of Worship, a representative of the deceased deacon's deanery, members of the parish staff of the deceased deacon's parish of assignment, the Director of Diaconal Ministry or his designee, and the Master of Ceremonies.
- C. The liturgy of Christian burial should reflect that it is being celebrated for a deacon who, if married, has the dual vocation of Christian Marriage and Holy Orders.

- D. The widow's or family's requests and input is very important in planning the funeral liturgy.
- E. The time for the funeral should be no earlier than 10 a.m. This allows ample time for the Bishop, priests, and deacons to attend.
- F. At the funeral Mass the procession of ministers and family members takes place at the entrance to the church and should include the body of the deceased, situated so that his head rests nearest the altar with his feet towards the congregation.
1. If the deceased deacon is vested, it is suggested that a casket with a removable top be used with no pall.
 2. If the casket is to be closed, then a pall must be used. If the deacon is a veteran, the American flag should not be used in place of the pall.
 - a. The flag may be laid over the casket at the cemetery before interment.
 3. The order of the procession is: cross, candle bearers, the widow and family of the deceased, deacon of the Word (carrying the Book of the Gospels), deacons vested in alb and stole, concelebrating priests, casket, the Bishop, the deacon of the altar, and the master of ceremonies.
 4. Even though the rite of reception was done at the vigil service, there is a full procession at the funeral Mass.
 5. The wives of deacons should be seated in an area reserved for them
 - a. The deacons, after reverencing the altar are seated in front of the section reserved for their wives.
 - b. The deacon of the word and the deacon of the altar take their proper places in the sanctuary.
 6. The Book of the Gospels should be placed on or near the casket, as a sign of the deacon's ministry; the paschal candle should also be placed near the casket.
- G. For the reading of the Gospel, the deacon of the Word may use the Book of the Gospels, which was earlier placed on or near the casket. After the proclamation, the Gospel book is returned to the casket area.

- H. The Bishop is the celebrant of the Mass and the pastor is usually the homilist.
 - 1. However, there are times when another priest or deacon might be a more appropriate as a homilist depending upon his relationship to the deceased and in accord with the wishes of the family.
 - 2. The homily should never be a eulogy, but a reflection on the death and resurrection theme of Christian burial.
 - I. The deacon of the Word should read the general intercessions, specially designed for a deacon. (OCF 29)
 - J. The Eucharist should be offered to the faithful under both species.
 - 1. The master of ceremonies should designate a sufficient number of ministers before Mass so that they know their stations.
 - 2. Priests or deacons should be used as ministers of the Communion.
 - K. One member of the family may speak before the Rite of Commendation in order to:
 - 1. Recall the memory of the deceased deacon
 - 2. Thank those in attendance (this should be brief)
 - L. As a sign of farewell during the procession after the funeral Mass, the deacons and priests form two lines outside the church doors or down the center aisle of the church and, as the casket passes by, they will offer an inaudible blessing in tribute to the deceased deacon.
- IV. Services at the Grave
- A. A deacon, depending on the wishes of the family, may lead the graveside liturgy, using the committal service found in the ritual.
 - B. The Bishop may, but is not expected to, attend the graveside service.
 - C. If the deceased deacon is a veteran, a military honor guard at graveside may be present for the presentation of the flag to the widow/family.
- V. Other Concerns
- A. There is no prohibition against donating one's body or organs for research or transplants.

- B. If the remains of the deceased are not present for the services, a memorial Mass for the dead should be celebrated using the readings and prayers found in the *Lectionary and Sacramentary for the Anniversary of the Deceased*.
- C. If the remains of the deceased deacon are cremated, the applicable procedures specified in the *Order of Christian Funerals* should be followed.
- D. Refer to [Appendix I: Funeral Planning Form](#) (Page C-56) which deacons should submit to the Office of Diaconal Ministry.



DIocese OF AUSTIN

The Deacon at the Mass

I. Purpose

- A. It is the policy of the Diocese of Austin:
1. That deacons understand the role of the deacon at the Mass and other liturgical rites
 2. That deacons participate in the Mass and other liturgies in manners that are in compliance with the *General Instructions of the Roman Missal* (GIRM), *Ceremonial of Bishops* (CB), and other applicable documents governing liturgies
 3. That deacons respect the sacredness of the Mass and other liturgies by adhering to the applicable instructions as closely as possible
- B. This document sets forth basic expectations of the deacons at the Mass. Deacons, priests, and liturgical directors are encouraged to be familiar with this document.

II. General Principles

- A. The deacon has a major role in the celebration of Mass.
1. His primary duty is to assist the presider.
 2. 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.
 3. The sacred order of the diaconate has been held in high honor in the Church since the time of the Apostles.

- B. The following is based upon the Roman Missal Formational Materials provided by the USCCB.
1. At Mass, the deacon:
 - a. Assists the priest and remains at his side
 - b. Ministers at the altar (with the chalice)
 - c. Proclaims the Gospel and, at the direction of the priest celebrant, may preach the homily
 - d. Guides the faithful by appropriate introductions and explanations and announces the intentions of the Universal Prayer (that is, the Prayer of the Faithful)
 - e. Assists the priest celebrant in distributing holy Communion, and purifies and arranges the sacred vessels
 - f. Fulfills, as needed, the duties of other ministers himself if none of them is present. *When he is present at the Eucharistic Celebration, a deacon should exercise his ministry.* (GIRM 171)
 2. The Eucharistic sacrifice of the Mass is the action of Christ (GIRM 11) and of God's people, in which the human race adores the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit, and the faithful join themselves to Christ in giving thanks and acknowledging the great things God has done.
 - a. The Mass is the "sacrament of unity" in which the faithful are nourished from the table of God's word and of Christ's body. This unity is expressed particularly in common posture, in communal signing, reverential silence, and in sharing together the one bread and one cup.
 - b. The assumption of the *Roman Missal* is that every Sunday and feast day, the Eucharistic liturgy will be celebrated with song, with a cantor, with one or two readers, and with other assisting ministers.
 - c. It is also most desirable that the faithful present at Mass, priest celebrant, deacon, ministers, and those in the assembly, will receive the sacrament from bread and wine consecrated at the Mass, just as the priest celebrant must do (GIRM 85).
 - d. The liturgical books should be beautiful and appropriate to the celebration rather than being disposable pages or booklets.

III. Preparation before Mass

- A. Before Mass, the presider, or another person requested by the presider, may lead those who will participate as ministers in the Mass in a prayer.
- B. The deacon is encouraged to review the preparations for the Mass (for example, lectionary, Book of Gospels, vessels, linens, gifts, microphones, etc.). See [Appendix III: FAQ - Deacon at the Mass](#) (Page C-61) for suggested items to address before Mass.
- C. The vestment appropriate to the deacon is the dalmatic (of appropriate liturgical color) worn over the alb and stole.
 - 1. The deacon should wear the dalmatic at least on Sundays and major occasions.
 - 2. If a dalmatic, which matches (or appears appropriate with) the presider's chasuble is not available, the deacon may wear an alb and stole of appropriate liturgical color.
 - 3. The stole is not worn outside the dalmatic.

IV. Entrance Procession

- A. When entering the church for any celebration, clergy and servers should take holy water and make the sign of the cross to recall the grace of baptism.
- B. The order of the entrance procession is (in most Masses):
 - 1. Thurifer (together with or followed by boat)
 - 2. Processional cross
 - 3. Candles
 - 4. Readers if part of procession ([see § 4.C below](#) (Page C-44))
 - 5. Book of Gospels (by the deacon of the word)
 - 6. Visiting deacons
 - 7. Concelebrating priests
 - 8. Presider (along with deacon of the altar)
 - 9. Master of ceremonies

- C. Readers and extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist are not generally part of the procession. However, the presider may, at his option, invite readers to process.
- D. The Lectionary is not used in the procession; only the Book of Gospels, which should be carried only by a deacon.
1. If a deacon is not present at the Mass, the Book of Gospels may be placed on the altar before Mass or, alternatively, a reader may carry the Book of Gospels in the absence of a deacon.
 2. If a deacon is at Mass, it is preferred that the Book of Gospels be used.
 3. If a Book of Gospels is not available, the deacon (one or both) should process alongside the presider.
- E. Visiting deacons and concelebrants should obtain instruction before Mass from the master of ceremonies or presider regarding the procession and seating arrangements. Visiting clergy should also obtain instruction about their role in the distribution of communion. The deacon of the altar may wish to verify that these instructions have been or will be given.
1. Generally, only the deacon of the altar and the deacon of the word should be in the sanctuary with the presider and concelebrants.
 2. Generally, other deacons do not vest and are seated with the congregation.
 - a. At special and larger celebrations (ordinations, funerals, Chrism Mass, or other times when deacons come to Mass as a body), visiting deacons may vest and be seated in an appropriate location as directed by the presider, which is generally in a reserved pew near the sanctuary.
 - b. Visiting deacons do not approach the altar during the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
 3. If a deacon other than the deacon of the word or deacon of the altar is to deliver the homily, he may sit in the sanctuary but does not approach the altar during the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
 4. Visiting deacons who are not serving as the deacon of the word or deacon of the altar may assist in distributing communion, distribution of ashes, blessing of throats, etc.
 - a. When performing this function, the visiting deacon(s) should be properly vested.

- F. As the deacon of the word approaches the altar with the Book of Gospels, omitting the sign of reverence (do not kneel or bow), he places the Book of the Gospels on the altar and steps to the side to await the presider. The deacon of the word then reverences (kisses) the altar alongside the presider.
- G. As the deacon of the altar approaches the altar with the presider, he either genuflects or bows (as is appropriate) before the altar with the presider and then reverences (kisses) the altar alongside the presider and the deacon of the word.
- H. Upon entering the sanctuary, bow of the body is made to the altar when the Blessed Sacrament is not on or behind it (GIRM 274). One genuflects if the Blessed Sacrament is on or behind the altar.
1. If the tabernacle is located in the sanctuary, the genuflection to it is only when the persons in the sanctuary first approach the altar and when they leave the sanctuary at the recessional but not repeatedly during Mass.
 2. All who pass before the Blessed Sacrament genuflect, unless they are carrying the processional incense, cross, or candles. These ministers bow their heads instead of genuflecting.
 3. During Mass, a bow is made when passing the altar.
 4. If the tabernacle is behind the altar and one passes between the altar and the tabernacle, the bow is made to the altar during Mass.
 5. When the entrance procession is large (for example, a large number of visiting deacons and concelebrants) and the tabernacle is behind the altar, there may be need to simply bow as they approach the altar
 - a. Such direction should be obtained before Mass from the presider or Master of Ceremonies.
 6. A bow should also be made to the Bishop upon approaching or before leaving him and when passing in front of him.
- I. If incense is being used, at the presider's option and instruction, the deacon may assist the presider in putting incense in the censer and follow the presider as the presider incenses the cross and the altar.
1. If the deacon follows the presider, the purpose is for the deacon to hold vestments back away from the censer for the presider.

2. If there is no need to hold vestments back, the preference is that the deacon not follow the presider during the incensation and, instead, move toward his seat or proper place (See [Appendix III: FAQ - Deacon at the Mass](#) (Page C-61) for the proper form of incensation).
- J. When one deacon is at the Mass, the deacon sits to the right of the presider.
1. When the Bishop presides and there is one deacon, the deacon should sit to the right of the Bishop, and the pastor should sit to the left of the Bishop.
- K. When two deacons are present, it is preferred that the deacon of the word sit to the right of the presider and the deacon of the altar sit to the left of the presider.
1. When the Bishop presides and there are two deacons, the deacons should sit on either side and next to the Bishop, and the pastor of the parish should sit in a prominent place.
- L. Generally, the posture of the deacon when standing is to have hands joined, palm to palm, fingers together, right thumb locked over the left. This applies during the procession and when standing. When sitting, generally, the deacon sits with hands on his lap or resting on the arms of the chair. He does not cross his legs.
- V. Introductory Rites
- A. After the procession and any incensation, the presider makes the Sign of the Cross and greets the faithful.
- B. If a server is not present, the deacon assists the priest with the Missal.
- C. If Penitential Rite 6 is used, the priest or deacon announces or sings the invocations to which the congregation responds.
1. The deacon should be careful not to spontaneously compose invocations but, instead, to read from the Missal or be otherwise prepared.
 - a. Sample invocations may be found in the Missal in Appendix VI, pp, 1316-1322.
- D. If the rite of blessing and sprinkling of holy water is used, the deacon assists the presider.
1. The deacon holds the water and follows the presider.
 2. If the congregation is large, there may be more than one water vessel and more than one aspergillum.

3. If the congregation is large, the presider may instruct the deacon to assist by taking his own water vessel and aspergillum and sprinkling the faithful.
4. Generally, the deacon of word assists in this rite (both deacons may assist if necessary).

VI. Liturgy of the Word

- A. Ordinarily, the deacon does not read the readings or psalms. If lectors are not present, the deacon may wish to find appropriate substitutes (only in the case of last resort should the deacon read the readings or psalms).
- B. During all readings and psalms, the attention of all persons (including the deacon and presider) should be deliberately focused on the lector or cantor. One should exercise care not to give the impression that he is disinterested or not paying attention.
- C. All stand for the singing of the Alleluia or Verse before the Gospel.
 1. If the Alleluia or Verse before the Gospel is not sung, it should be omitted.
 2. The Alleluia or Verse before the Gospel is for the purpose of procession. Therefore, one should begin the actions surrounding the proclamation of the Gospel promptly after the music begins.
 3. The deacon should be generally familiar with movement and timing during the procession and, if necessary, include appropriate pauses (for example, before the altar, before the people, or before placing the book on the ambo).
 4. Additionally, if incense is used, the deacon should not move until after the presider has prepared the incense.
- D. At the appropriate time, the deacon makes a deep bow before the presider and asks for a blessing, saying quietly, "Your blessing, Father." The presider blesses the deacon with the words, "May the Lord be in your heart and on your lips, that you may proclaim his Gospel worthily and well, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The deacon signs himself with the Sign of the Cross and responds, "Amen."
- E. Bishop Vásquez prefers to remain seated until after he prepares the incense (if any) and blesses the deacon.
 1. In most cases, the alter servers will come and kneel before the Bishop before the Alleluia or Verse before the Gospel commences and the Bishop prepares the incense (prepared in silence).

- a. This step is omitted, if no incense is used.
2. The deacon of the word then stands, as does the congregation, and the Alleluia or Verse before the Gospel commences.
 3. The deacon of the word then kneels before the Bishop (unless physically unable), says “Your blessing, Father,” and receives the Bishop’s blessing.
 5. The deacon of the word then processes to the ambo in accordance with the protocol outlined above.
 6. After the Bishop blesses the deacon of the word, he will stand, remove his miter, and take is crozier from the master of ceremonies or altar server.
 7. Because the initiation of the Alleluia or Verse before the Gospel may vary from parish to parish, the deacon of the word may wish to confirm, before Mass, the movement described in this section with the altar servers, cantor, choir, and master of ceremonies.
- F. The deacon goes to the altar.
1. Depending on local custom, he may be joined by servers with lighted candles and the incense bearer.
 2. After bowing to the altar, the deacon reverently takes the Book of Gospels and without further reverence to the altar, carries the book with solemnity to the ambo, preceded, if applicable, by the censer and servers with candles.
- G. At the ambo, the deacon, with hands joined, greets the people, by saying, “The Lord be with you.”
1. The deacon does not extend his hands during the greeting.
 2. He does not improvise on the liturgical greeting (for example, saying something similar to “Lord be with us” or “My brothers and sisters...”).
- H. After the people respond “And with your spirit” to the deacon’s greeting, the deacon makes the Sign of the Cross on the book and says at the same time “A reading from the holy Gospel according to...” He then makes the Sign of the Cross on his forehead, lips, and breast and all present do the same.
1. If incense is used, the deacon then takes the censer from the server and incenses the book - not the congregation - with three single swings.

- I. The deacon proclaims the Gospel reading.
 1. The deacon should not raise the book while proclaiming the Gospel or at the end of the Gospel reading when he says “The Gospel of the Lord.”
 2. The deacon should not improvise by changing or adding to this concluding statement.

- J. After the Gospel reading and if the Bishop is not present, the deacon bends and kisses the book and quietly says “Through the words of the Gospel may our sins be wiped away.”
 1. The deacon does not lift the book to reverence it.
 2. If the Bishop is present, the deacon brings the open book to the Bishop to reverence.
 - a. The deacon does not reverence the book if the Bishop is present.
 3. If the Bishop is present and the Book of Gospels is not used, the lectionary should not be brought to the Bishop.
 4. If the Bishop is present, the deacon should, before Mass, ascertain where he is to bring the Book of Gospels to the Bishop (for example, before the altar or at the Bishop’s chair).
 - a. Bishop Vásquez prefers to remain standing at the presider’s chair awaiting the deacon to bring the Book of Gospels for him to reverence.

- K. In more solemn celebrations, as circumstances allow, the Bishop may impart a blessing to the people with the Book of the Gospels. The deacon may want to ascertain before Mass if the Bishop intends to impart such a blessing.

- L. The deacon carries the Book of the Gospels to the credence table or another suitable and dignified place (GIRM 175).

- M. The homily is then presented by the presider, deacon, or other clergy participating in the liturgy.
 1. During the homily, the attention of all persons (including the deacon and presider) should be deliberately focused on the homilist.
 2. One should exercise care not to give the impression that he is disinterested or not paying attention.

- N. After the priest introduces the Universal Prayer the deacon of the word announces the intentions, as a rule. He remains at the ambo while the priest concludes the Universal Prayer.
1. The deacon should not invite others to announce personal or special intercessions without the consent of the presider.

VII. Liturgy of the Eucharist

- A. After the Universal Prayer, while the presider remains at the chair, the deacon of the altar prepares the altar, assisted by the acolyte(s) or servers, but the care of the sacred vessels belongs to the deacon.
1. In a larger Mass, it may be necessary and expedient to have many of the cups pre-filled and to have ciboria pre-filled.
 2. Any pre-filling should be at the instruction of the presider.
 - a. If the Bishop presides, the preference is to pre-fill the cups, except the presider's chalice, when more than four (4) cups are used.
 3. The deacon of the word remains at his chair/place until after the Prayer over the Offerings.
- B. The deacon of the altar then assists the presider in receiving the people's gifts.
- C. After the deacon hands the presider the paten with the bread to be consecrated, he pours wine and a little water into the presider's chalice saying quietly: "By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity." He then passes the chalice to the presider.
1. When preparing the chalice, the deacon should not:
 - a. Bless the cruets in which the water and wine are brought forward
 - b. Pour water into the flagon
 - c. Pour water into the other cups
 2. He may also make this preparation of the chalice at the side table.
- D. All gifts to be consecrated should be placed on the corporal.
1. Gifts should be spread out and not crowded.

2. Additional corporals may be used.
- E. The deacon of the altar stands to the right of the presider, but away from the altar (back several paces, indicating that he is not a concelebrant). The deacon of the word stands to the left of the presider, but away from the altar.
1. During the Eucharistic Prayer, the deacons stand near but slightly behind the presider, so that, when needed, the deacon of the altar may assist the presider with the chalice or the Roman Missal.
 2. If there are concelebrants, the deacons may need to deviate his position slightly to accommodate the concelebrants.
- F. If incense is used, the deacon of the altar may, at the discretion of the presider, assist the presider with the incensation of the gifts, the cross and the altar. Afterward, the deacon incenses the presider, the concelebrants, and the people (GIRM 178). (See [Appendix III: FAQ - Deacon at the Mass](#) (Page C-61) for the proper form of incensation).
1. The order of incensation by the deacon is:
 - a. The presider
 - b. Any concelebrants (who may be seated in different locations), and then
 - c. Visiting deacons and the people, together
 2. Normally, one incensation for the entire congregation should be sufficient regardless of the number of pew sections.
 3. All incensations are to be three (3) single swings.
- G. As a general rule, from the epiclesis until after the elevation of the chalice, the deacon remains kneeling.
1. If the deacon is physically unable to kneel, the deacon bows when the presider genuflects after the consecration.
 - a. If one deacon is unable to kneel, the other deacon, if any, should not kneel but bow.

NOTE: The preference is that the deacon kneels when the presider extends cupped hands over the host at the time of consecration (the epiclesis) to the point where the presider says “The mystery of faith.” Eucharistic Prayer I calls for the presider to make the Sign of the Cross over the bread prior to extending cupped hands in the Eucharistic epiclesis.

- H. If there are several deacons present and if there will be incensation at the elevation, one of the deacons (usually the deacon of the word) goes to place incense in the censer for the consecration and then incenses at the elevation of the host and the chalice (GIRM 179).
1. In this event, the deacon should know, in advance, where he will kneel and whether a server will assist him.
- I. The invitation, “The mystery of faith,” is said by the presider.
- J. At the final doxology of the Eucharistic Prayer, the deacon of the altar stands next to the presider, and after the presider hands him the chalice, he elevates the chalice as the presider raises the paten with the Eucharistic bread, until the people have responded with the acclamation “Amen” (GIRM 180).
1. The chalice and paten should be raised in unison to a similar height and near one another (no more than one or two feet apart).
- K. The final doxology of the Eucharistic Prayer is said alone by the presider and any concelebrants.
- L. During the “Our Father,” the deacon stands at his place (slightly behind the presider). His posture is hands folded together.
- M. After the presider has said the prayer for 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 of the altar may invite all to exchange the sign of peace, saying, with hands joined and facing the people: “Let us offer each other the sign of peace.” He himself receives the sign of peace from the presider and may offer it to the other ministers near him (GIRM 181).
1. The deacon should not improvise by changing or adding to the words of invitation.
- N. Unless otherwise instructed by the presider, the deacon of the altar approaches the tabernacle and brings any reserved hosts to the altar during the time the people are exchanging the sign of peace.
- O. During the Agnus Dei, as the presider breaks the Body of Christ, the deacon of the altar may assist the presider in apportioning Body of Christ into the ciboria.
- P. If there are concelebrants, the paten is brought to the concelebrants either by the presider, deacon, or master of ceremonies.

1. The deacon does not take a portion of the Body of Christ for himself and hold it, because he is not a concelebrant.
- Q. Immediately after the presider has drunk from the chalice, and before any concelebrants receive from the chalice, he turns and gives Communion under both kinds to the deacon of the altar and the deacon of the word.
1. A deacon receives the Eucharist from the presider.
 2. The deacon does not take the Body of Christ from a paten or take the chalice from the altar, as if he were a concelebrant.
- R. After the deacons receive both the Body and Blood from the presider, any concelebrants move to the altar to receive from the chalice.
1. If there are many concelebrants, the presider or deacons should space the other chalices on the altar so that more than one concelebrant at a time may receive from the chalice.
- S. The deacons may assist the presider in distributing holy communion to and handing the vessels to the extraordinary ministers of holy Communion.
- T. The deacon then assists the presider in giving holy communion to the people.
1. If there are multiple Eucharistic bread ciboria, the ciboria containing the Body of Christ should be ministered by ministers in the following order:
 - a. The presider
 - b. Concelebrants
 - c. Deacons of the altar and word
 - d. Visiting deacons
 - e. Extraordinary ministers of holy Communion
 2. Because the deacon is the minister of the chalice, the deacon of the word and the deacon of the altar (assuming they are not distributing the Eucharistic bread) should minister the chalice before any distribution chalices are taken by any concelebrants.
 3. It is not proper for an extraordinary minister of holy Communion to distribute the Body or Blood of Christ instead of a priest or deacon who is participating in the Mass (exceptions for physical conditions may apply).

- U. When the distribution is completed, the deacon immediately and reverently consumes, at the altar, all of the Blood of Christ which remains.
 - 1. He may be assisted, if needs dictate, by other deacons and priests (GIRM 182) or, in their absence, by extraordinary ministers of holy Communion.

- V. After the distribution of communion, the deacon returns to the altar with the presider and collects any remaining hosts or fragments.
 - 1. The deacon of the altar (preferred), or acolyte, or extraordinary minister of holy Communion places any reserve in the tabernacle.

- W. If not already placed on a side table by those distributing holy communion, the deacon of the altar takes the chalice and other vessels to the side table, where he purifies them and arranges them in the usual way. The presider returns to the chair.
 - 1. It is permissible to leave the vessels to be purified, suitably covered and at a side table on a corporal, to be purified immediately after Mass following the dismissal of the people (GIRM 183).
 - a. Purification of the vessels after Mass is the preferred practice, at a Mass at which the Bishop presides, unless the purification of the vessels may be completed as holy communion is distributed prior to the time that the Bishop returns to his chair and is seated.

VIII. Concluding Rite

- A. Following the Prayer After Communion, if there are any brief announcements, one of the deacons may make them, unless the priest prefers to do so himself (GIRM 184).

- B. If a more solemn formula for the blessing is used, or a prayer over the people, the deacon of the altar says: "Bow down for the blessing" after the presider says "The Lord be with you."

- C. After the presider's blessing, the deacon of the altar, with hands joined and facing the people, dismisses them, using one (1) of the following:
 - 1. Go forth, the Mass is ended.
 - 2. Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.
 - 3. Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.
 - 4. Go in peace.

NOTE: The deacon should not improvise or change the words of dismissal.

- D. Along with the presider, the deacon venerates the altar with a kiss, genuflects or makes a profound bow, and leaves in the manner prescribed for the entrance procession (GIRM 186).

IX. Recessional

- A. The order of the recessional is (in most Masses):
1. Processional cross
 2. Servers with candles
 - a. If used in the entrance procession
 - b. The thurible and boat are left in the sacristy or sanctuary
 3. Other servers
 4. Visiting deacons
 5. Concelebrating priests
 6. Presider with the deacon of the altar and the deacon of the word at his side
 - a. The Book of the Gospels is left in the sanctuary
 - b. If the aisle is narrow the deacons should walk slightly behind the presider
 - c. If the Bishop is the presider, the deacon (one or both) should walk slightly behind the Bishop
 7. Master of ceremonies
- B. Normally, readers and extraordinary ministers of holy Communion are not part of the recessional.

Appendix I: Funeral Planning Form

Funeral Planning Form

TO: OFFICE OF THE DIACONATE, DIOCESE OF AUSTIN

FROM: Deacon: _____ Date: _____

In accordance with the approved *Guidelines for the Burial of a Deacon* in the Diocese of Austin, the following information concerning my personal request/preferences relative to burial arrangements in the event of my death is voluntarily submitted. These requests are to be considered valid upon receipt and until they are modified or rescinded by me by sending written notification to the Director of Diaconal Ministry for the Diocese of Austin. If I am married, I represent that: (i) I have discussed these requests with my wife; and (ii) she acknowledges my requests by signing below. I understand that these requests are not to be considered as my last will and testament, rather an informal document intended to assist the Office of Diaconal Ministry, the Bishop of the Diocese of Austin, and the Director of the Office of Worship in carrying out their responsibilities pertinent to my burial arrangements. I understand that it is my responsibility to review this form at least every five years.

Last Name	First	Middle Initial	Wife's First Name
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Home Address	City	State	ZIP
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Home Phone _____

I request the following deacon/priest to serve as coordinator to assist my family in supervising the burial arrangements.

Deacon/Priest Name	Address	Telephone
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If the above cannot perform duties as coordinator, I request the following alternates.

Deacon/Priest Name	Address	Telephone
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Deacon/Priest Name	Address	Telephone
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I (am) (am not) a veteran.

I (do) (do not) wish an American flag.

I (do) (do not) wish a military honor guard at the graveside.

I wish the following person to lead the vigil service.

First Preference:

Deacon/Priest/Other Name	Address	Telephone
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Second Preference:

Deacon/Priest/Other Name	Address	Telephone
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I understand that the Bishop is the celebrant of the funeral Mass (unless he is unable to attend). I would like the following priests to concelebrate as well as any other priests attending and who wish to do so (list in order of preferred substitute celebrant if the Bishop cannot preside):

(1) Rev: _____ (2) Rev: _____

(3) Rev: _____ (4) Rev: _____

I would like the following deacon(s) to assist at the Mass:

Deacon _____ Deacon _____

I would like Deacon or Rev. _____ to be the homilist.

It (is) (is not) my intention to be cremated.

I understand that the preference is that remains are to be cremated after the funeral Mass and that the body is to be in a casket during the funeral Mass and vigil service. (See *Order of Christian Burials*).

I would like to be vested in: _____ my alb, stole, and dalmatic
 _____ my alb and stole
 _____ I do not wish to be vested in liturgical vestments

Note: If you choose not to be vested in liturgical vestments, you will be dressed in appropriate attire chosen by your family. In such a case, your stole may be placed on or near the casket but not over secular attire.

Liturgy requests for vigil service:

Readings: _____

Music: _____

I (wish) (do not wish) to invite comments near the end of the vigil service to be made by a friend or a family member.

If so, by whom? _____

Liturgy requests for Mass:

Prayers: _____

Readings: _____

Music (processional, recessional, presentation of gifts, communion, etc.): _____

I (wish) (do not wish) to invite comments to be made after communion by a friend or family member.

If so, by whom? _____

Other special requests: _____

Other information that may be of assistance to those planning the liturgy and burial: _____

The foregoing are my requests as of the date signed.

Deacon's Signature: _____ Date: _____

I acknowledge that I have read this form and understand my husband's requests (if married).

Wife's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Recommendation

It is best for those whom you wish to participate in your vigil service and funeral Mass to be aware of your preferences. You are encouraged to let them know that you have designated them on this form and request that they be willing to participate.

You are encouraged to provide a copy of this form to the person or persons who will be responsible for organizing your funeral arrangements (spouse, children, or others).

Update this form from time to time as may be necessary.

Return to:

The Director of Diaconal Ministry
Diocese of Austin
6225 Highway 290 East
Austin, TX 78723

Appendix II: Diaconate Formation Program

Appendix II is the *Deacon Formation Program Manual* for the Diocese of Austin.

Appendix III: FAQ – Deacon at the Mass

- I. What are some of the items that a deacon should review to help assure that the Mass is properly prepared?
- A. Have you communicated with the presider and determined if there are any particular instructions or events that will take place before, during, or after Mass?
 - B. If there are any visiting clergy, have they received instructions concerning the distribution of communion, places to sit, the procession, and the recessional?
 - C. Have the altar servers been instructed about any particular issues? Do they know their responsibilities?
 - D. Who will lead the prayer before Mass?
 - E. Are there any special events at the Mass or special persons attending Mass that the presider needs to be made aware of prior to Mass?
 - F. Is the Sacramentary marked to proper pages? Hymnals?
 - G. Is the sound system on and charged batteries in the lapel microphones?
 - H. Do you know which form of the Penitential Rite will be used? If Penitential Rite 6 is used, will the deacon announce or sing the petitions?
 - I. Do you know where to place the Book of the Gospels after it is proclaimed?
 - J. If you are preaching, is the presider aware of the emphasis of your homily?
 - K. Are the candles lit?
 - L. Have you set the Lectionary and Book of Gospels to their proper pages?
 - M. Have you reviewed the Universal Prayer, that is the Prayer of the Faithful, (especially for pronunciations) and placed them at the ambo?
 - N. Are the homilist's notes at the ambo?
 - O. Are the gifts on the gift table?
 - P. Is the credence table set with the items necessary for the Liturgy of the Eucharist?
 - Q. Are you prepared to give the final dismissal?

- R. Do you know all of your parts (especially the parts you should know by heart)?
- S. Are you aware of how the presider wishes you to purify the vessels after communion?
- T. If incense is used, do you know the presider's preferences with respect to incensation?
- II. Who determines when the deacon preaches?
- A. The pastor or his designate. A pastor should require the schedule to be published well enough in advance to permit priests and deacons to prepare appropriately to deliver homilies. Absent any unusual circumstances, pastors are encouraged to have deacons preach periodically during the year.
- III. If a visiting priest celebrates the Mass, should any deacon or priest who is scheduled to preach that Mass offer not to preach to permit the visiting priest to preach?
- A. This is a matter for the presider to decide. Nonetheless, the decision as to who will preach if a visiting priest attends should be communicated as quickly as possible to any deacon or priest who is otherwise preparing to preach at that same Mass.
- IV. The appropriate dress for a deacon at the Mass is the dalmatic. What if a dalmatic is not available?
- A. The use of an alb and stole is appropriate in this situation.
- V. What if the dalmatic does not match the chasuble?
- A. The use of an alb and stole is appropriate in this situation. (Use one's best discretion to determine whether it matches or not.)
- VI. What is the appropriate dress for a deacon at other liturgies?
- A. See *Appropriate Attire and Title for Permanent Deacons* (Page C-20).
- VII. Is it appropriate for a deacon to place his hand on the altar when reverencing the altar?
- A. No. The reverencing is a liturgical gesture and should be made deliberately and with proper respect and posture. The deacon should also respect any local customs.

VIII. What is the proper way to use incense?

- A. Three single swings. Before and after an incensation, a profound bow is made.
- B. Incense may be used:
 - 1. At the beginning of Mass to incense the altar and the crucifix by the presider
 - 2. At the reading the Gospel to incense the Gospel Book by the deacon
 - 3. At the preparation of the altar and gifts by the presider, in which case the deacon incenses the presider, concelebrants, and people
 - 4. At the time of elevation (optional)
- C. If directed by the presider, the Blessed Sacrament is incensed from a kneeling position usually by the deacon of the word.
- D. The Bishop receives incensation standing and without the miter.
- E. If incense is being used, at the presider's option and instruction, the deacon may:
 - 1. Assist the presider in putting incense in the censer
 - 2. Follow the presider as the presider incenses the cross and the altar.
 - a. If the deacon follows the presider, the purpose is for the deacon to hold vestments back away from the censer for the presider.
 - b. If there is no need to hold vestments back, the preference is that the deacon not follow the presider.
- F. At the time the gifts are prepared, the order of incensation by the deacon is:
 - 1. The presider
 - 2. Any concelebrants (who may be seated in different locations)
 - 3. Visiting deacons along with the people (visiting deacons are not incensed separately)
- G. Normally, one incensation for the entire congregation should be sufficient regardless of the number of pew sections.

- IX. Which deacon sits to the left of the presider and which deacon sits to the right?
- A. Generally, the deacon of the word will sit to the right and the deacon of the altar will sit to the left. However, another configuration may be necessary if circumstances require. Both deacons should be near the presider.
- X. What is the proper form of blessing?
- A. A deacon or priest who gives a blessing gives it to others. He does not include himself with words such as “May almighty God bless us.” To say the words “May almighty God bless you” is to accept the responsibility given by the Church in ordination; it is not a question of self-aggrandizement.
- B. It is not correct to say, “May God bless you *in the name* of the Father...” God does not bless *in His name*.
1. The correct form is, “May almighty God bless you, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”
- XI. What is the proper posture for the deacon at Mass?
- A. When standing, generally, the deacon should stand with hands folded.
- B. When proclaiming the Gospel, the deacon may fold his hands or place his hands on the ambo or book. The deacon should not use gestures or lift the book when proclaiming the Gospel.
- C. When sitting, generally, the deacon should sit erect with legs together and hands on his thighs, resting on the arms of the chair, or hands folded and resting his lap. The deacon should remain still in his seat. He does not cross his legs.