

Customary for  
Deacons  
May 2021



**EDSD**  
COURAGEOUS LOVE

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# An Introduction from Bishop Susan Brown Snook

*Jesus said, "For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves." Luke 22:27*

The call to service is foundational for all Christians. We follow a Savior who came among us as one who serves, and who demonstrated it by healing the sick, feeding the hungry, washing the feet of his disciples, and ultimately laying down his life for us. We promise in our baptismal vows to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbors as ourselves. We accept that call to service as we allow Christ to nourish us with the sacraments of the church and then send us out into the world to be the Body of Christ for others.

In the ministry of deacons, Jesus' call to service comes to focus in a special way. The deacon reminds every Christian of our call to serve others, and at best, the deacon is a steady voice, leading the church out into the world to love the world that Jesus loves. The deacon is a community organizer, constantly in dialogue with the real people and the real needs of the community in order to call the church into awareness and service. The deacon refuses to allow the church to remain comfortable, but calls us into uncomfortable places where Jesus may be found in the least of his siblings (Matthew 25). Therefore, the deacon brings us into direct contact with Christ himself. In the dismissal at the end of every Eucharist, the deacon symbolizes that call by sending us out into the world, carrying the joy and love we have received at the altar out to our community.

Here in the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego, our vision is to expand the number of deacons so that many more congregations can benefit from their servant leadership. The diaconal role is central to our vision of making Christ known through Courageous Love. Working in partnership with baptized Christians, priests, and the bishop, deacons can lead us to new awareness of God's call and new ways of expressing God's love through evangelism and service. We have created a comprehensive training school for deacons at the School for Ministry, and hope that many more Christians will hear God's call urging them to enter discernment for this holy order of ministry.

This customary introduces our churches and their clergy to the expansive role deacons can play in congregations and in the world as a full yet separate order of Episcopal ordained ministers. I hope you will read it, enjoy it, and learn how Christ is calling all of us, especially the ordained deacons of our church, into servant ministry. In this work, I invite all the churches of our diocese to help us find and form future Deacons who will continue to send us all out to do God's work in the world. I pray for the deacons yet to be ordained, who will inspire all of us to transformation in Jesus' name.

In Christ,

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Susan Brown Snook  
Bishop of San Diego  
May 2021

## Purpose of the Customary

This Customary clarifies the role of deacons as ordained ministers in service to the world and to the church and to communicate how deacons will function and be supported in the Diocese of San Diego. These customs shall be regarded and observed in this diocese by laypersons, bishops, and presbyters, as well as deacons.

The information herein was created by a team of deacons and priests in the diocese, including the Ven. Pam Rieger, Archdeacon of San Diego; the Rev. Cindy Campos; the Rev. Ron Goldfarb; the Rev. Dr. Mark Hargreaves; the Rev. Canon Nancy Holland; and the Rev. Robert Lewis. It is presented with the approval of the Rt. Rev. Dr. Susan Brown Snook, current Bishop of the Diocese of San Diego, and is guided by the vision statement of the Association for Episcopal Deacons, with reference to customaries from several other dioceses. Deep appreciation extends to Bette Jo Garrett for her editorial support.

This customary reflects work performed on defining the deacon's roles and responsibilities by the following dioceses, for which we express our grateful appreciation: The Episcopal Diocese of New York; The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland; The Episcopal Diocese of Olympia; and The Episcopal Diocese of Oregon.

## What Is a Deacon? Quotes on the Diaconate

"Deacons call us to the margins where Jesus expects to meet the church."

The Rt. Rev. Rob Wright, Bishop of Atlanta

"Deacons are the 'ants in the pants' of the church, spurring the church to care for others and look beyond institutional maintenance to mission in the world."

The Ven. Audrey Delafield, Retired Archdeacon, Diocese of Maine

"The diaconate, an institution of great importance in the early church, is again coming to life in the church as a ministry and office closely related to central aspects of the church's identity: service, outreach, humility, concern for human needs."

*The Diaconate as Ecumenical Opportunity*, The Hanover Report, p. 5 (1996)

"Of all the orders of ministry, the diaconate embodies the servanthood of Jesus, with concern for the last, the lost and the least."

Bishop Neil Alexander, Dean, School of Theology, Sewanee

"The qualifications for the diaconate are quite different from those of the priesthood. The tendency to create qualifications for deacons in the same general pattern (except in lesser degree) as for those in the priesthood remains a significant problem, stemming as it does from the centuries-old single model of ministry, that of the priest... The symbol of the deacon's ministry of the Word is the high privilege of reading the gospel at the Eucharist. Liturgically, this is the apex of the ministry of the Word, as is shown... by the people standing...."

James Monroe Barnett, *The Diaconate: A Full and Equal Order*

## Deacons: A Brief History

Deacons played an essential part in the development of the Early Church. The word "deacon" comes from the Greek word *diakonia*, which means "to serve." Acts 6 tells the story of how the apostles laid hands on seven men to serve the community's needs. These men were "full of faith and the Holy Spirit." One of them was Stephen, whose powerful preaching led to his martyrdom. Another was Philip, an evangelist who famously baptized the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8).

Not all the deacons in the Bible were men. Paul includes "Deacon Phoebe" in his greeting to the church in Rome (Romans 16:1). However, it would appear that all the deacons, both male and female, had a close association with their bishop. St. Paul addressed one of his epistles to "all the holy ones at Philippi, with their Bishops and Deacons in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:1).

These twin themes of the service of the diaconate and its close links with the bishop continue in the church's first three centuries. St. Ignatius, around 100 CE, said the deacon's task was "to continue the ministry of Jesus Christ...the Deacons represent Jesus Christ, the Bishop represents God, and the presbyters [priests] represent the council of the apostles." In "representing" Jesus, deacons represent the one who came "not to be served, but to serve." The biblical model for the deacon is Jesus himself, who said: "I am among you as one who serves."

Hippolytus, writing later in the third century, talks of deacons as "not ordained to priesthood but to the ministry of the bishop." The third-century document *Didascalia Apostolorum* paints a rich picture of the evolving office of a deacon. The deacon's work for the bishop included social welfare, visiting those in need, and informing the bishop of those in distress.

Laurence of Rome, whose story we know from the *Apostolic Tradition*, was in many ways the archetypal early church deacon. He had a particularly close relationship with his bishop, Sixtus, and had custody of alms for the poor. In August 258, Bishop Sixtus and his seven deacons were arrested. As the bishop and the other six deacons were carried away to be executed, Laurence cried after him, "Bishop, don't leave me. We shared the Blood of Christ. Let's share each other's blood." His cries were ignored. Laurence was kept separate because he knew where the gold was kept. When told to go and get the treasure, Laurence gathered the poor, the lame, the blind, all those for whom he cared, and said to his captors, "These are the treasures of the church." He was martyred on August 10, and was said to have been roasted alive on a gridiron.

Unfortunately, Laurence-like deacons came to an end, not so much because they were all martyred. Instead, the early church lost sight of the distinct nature of the diaconate and reduced it to a merely transitional phase on the way to priesthood. Thankfully, in recent decades the distinctiveness of the diaconate has been re-established. The move was begun by the Roman Catholic Church in Vatican II, and it was brought into the Episcopal Church in the 1970s. At that time, the word "deaconess" was abandoned, and "vocational" deacons were established. The twin characteristics of service to the poor and close links with the bishop, which distinguished the early church deacons, were restored.

## The Nature of the Diaconate

There is great confusion about the role and character of a deacon. This is due in part to the suppression and recovery of the permanent diaconate in the last century. Opinions often persist that deacons are somehow half-priests; some believe deacons are essentially laypersons who wear a collar and function differently than priests in the Eucharist. Neither assumption is correct. The *being* also termed the *ontology* of a deacon, is different from that of a priest.

The diaconate has a unique calling and ontology different from that of bishops, priests, and laypersons. According to the Catechism, *all* orders represent Christ and his church, and each order's calling is distinct. They may, at times, overlap. All are called to represent Christ and his Church, but the calling of deacons is different. Deacons have a special calling to be out in the world dealing with the maladies and issues of people, to relay those needs to the church, and, conversely, to convey the grace and aid of the church to the larger world.

The character of the deacon is twofold. If a postulant possesses a sense of calling to serve the poor, the sick, the marginalized, and the forgotten as a bridge from the church to the world, that calling is uniquely diaconal in character.

Also inherent to the ontology of the deacon is that of assistance. Certain portions of the liturgy underscore this assisting role. Deacons proclaim the Gospel in Eucharistic context, bid the confession, and set and clear the altar. Such functions point to the servant-leader character of the deacon.

Each sacrament can be said to evoke a change of ontology. Bread and wine become Body and Blood in the Eucharist, although we do not perceive the change from ordinary bread and wine. The change is ontological, not merely functional. Likewise, when called by God, a deacon affirmed by the church and ordained to that order through the laying on of hands by the bishop receives an ontological change. The Holy Spirit fills whatever is lacking in the ordinand to be the bridge between the church and the world through servant ministry leadership. The *being* of the ordinand is changed forever from what they were as a layperson.

## The Relationship Between the Bishop and the Deacons

Deacons serve immediately under the authority and the pastoral leadership of the bishop. The bishop assigns a deacon to a congregation after consultation with the deacon, the archdeacon(s), and the clergy member exercising oversight at the proposed assignment. For simplicity, in this document, the term "priest" is used for all priests leading a parish, whether s/he is considered a rector, vicar, or priest-in-charge. At a parish, the priest oversees and coordinates the day-to-day activities of the deacon's parochial ministry.

The bishop may also assign a deacon to a non-parochial ministry (Title III, Canon 7.4). In these instances, the deacon is still answerable to the bishop, but oversight and coordination of particular job responsibilities are governed by organizational structure.

## **Diaconal Access to the Bishop**

Though the archdeacons are responsible for updating the bishop on general activities of the diaconate, a deacon always has direct access to the bishop on matters of confidential, personal, or parochial importance.

## **Reporting to the Bishop**

At the beginning of each year, the bishop requests annual reports from the deacons, due March 1, summarizing their ministry, areas of growth and learning, and vision for the future. In the annual report, the deacon must include significant milestones and life changes as well as any continuing education undertaken in the past year.

Ordained deacons who arrive from other dioceses into the Diocese of San Diego will promptly schedule an appointment with the bishop and archdeacon.

## **Archdeacon(s)**

The bishop may assign deacon(s) to the position of archdeacon to share the duties and privileges of diocesan and diaconal administration. The archdeacon(s) serve as the bishop's designee(s). They work at the request of and on behalf of the bishop, primarily in management, communication, deployment, education, and formation of the deacons.

## **Obligatory Attendance**

Deacons are expected to attend Diocesan Convention, the Bishop's Annual Retreat with Deacons, and other events as deemed necessary. Deacons are invited and strongly encouraged to participate in all clergy events in the diocese, including periodic leadership events, clergy conferences, and the annual renewal of clergy vows. If a deacon cannot attend a clergy event in the diocese, s/he is expected to write the bishop before the absence explaining the reason for the absence.

Expenses for diocesan clergy events are the responsibility of the congregation, commensurate with other congregational clergies. Deacons shall consult directly with the bishop for any adjustments to this expectation. All deacons are also strongly encouraged to be involved in a regular rota to accompany the bishop on annual visitations to congregations that do not have a deacon.

## **Deacons and Diocesan Governance**

Because the deacon offers a prophetic voice wherever the church makes decisions, deacons are also encouraged, if employment time and geographic location permits, to have a voice in at least one diocesan decision-making body. Deacons are eligible for appointment or election to clergy positions on all boards, committees, and diocesan institutions.



## Deacons in Service to the World: Social Service Ministries in the Community

The diaconal ministry's central focus is to mobilize and motivate the church's laypeople into service to the community outside the boundaries of a congregation. Given the Episcopal Church's call to be a Missional Church, a deacon's role in the world is particularly appropriate. The ministry of deacons varies widely, taking such forms as a hospital or prison ministry; specialized counseling; ministry to the elderly, poor, dying, homeless people, or people with mental illness; or advocacy for social justice and change.

## Deacons in Service to the Church: The Parochial Assignment

After consultation with the deacon, the archdeacon, and the presbyter or other congregational leaders, the bishop appoints or assigns a deacon to one or more congregations, other faith communities non-parochial ministries (Title III, Canon 8.4).

Congregations may request a deacon and inform the bishop in writing with a letter from the priest indicating the congregation's needs and how they can best be met by a deacon. In addition to the deacon's gifts and the congregation's needs, the bishop and the archdeacon(s) will consider the church's distance and geographic location from the deacon's home and place of employment.

### Congregational Preparation

Before entering into a formal agreement, deacons are advised to make several unofficial visits to the church during liturgy and coffee hour events and to meet the priest on a social and then official basis.

### Responsibilities of the Congregation

It is expected that the deacon will be reimbursed by the parish for expenses related to their service, including reimbursement for mileage and costs of attending the Diocesan Convention, the annual clergy conference, and continuing education.

Consistent with other congregational clergy practices, deacons also have access to a discretionary fund so they may receive and distribute funds in connection with their specific ministries. A particular line item should be in the congregation's budget for these purposes. Ownership of discretionary accounts remains with the congregation to which the deacon is attached (*Manual of Business Methods in Church Affairs*, Chapter 5, Section C).

Additional responsibilities and roles within the congregation are negotiated and mutually agreed upon between the deacon and clergy in charge. When a deacon holds employment outside the congregation, this role needs to be considered when negotiating the deacon's agreements and requirements.

## Letter of Agreement

- ❖ In consultation with the priest-in-charge and the archdeacon, each deacon and congregation will develop and negotiate a letter of agreement (LOA). The bishop's office will supply model agreement forms to prepare the LOA (examples, Appendix I).
- ❖ The negotiated agreement is signed by all parties and the bishop within one month of the deacon's arrival at the church.
- ❖ The duration of the agreement is not to exceed three years, at which time it can be renewed. The term may be one year, at the request of the bishop, priest, or deacon. This shorter term should be considered for a deacon's first assignment in the diocese.
- ❖ Close to when the LOA expires, the deacon and bishop or bishop's designee will discuss subsequent placement plans. A new LOA is needed to reflect the next placement plans, signed by the bishop, priest, and deacon.

## The Priest-Deacon Relationship

The priest-deacon relationship has primary importance in the success of the deacon's assignment and every aspect of the deacon's ministry. Each works as a cooperative ministry partner with the other, and both understand the relevance of role distinction. Good communication cannot be emphasized enough. The priest-deacon team is encouraged to meet regularly for prayer, mutual review of the deacon's ministry, and planning.

## The Deacon's Time Commitment

The decision for service hours covenanted between priest and deacon depends on both the deacon's gifts and the priest's vision for the congregation. A general guideline is to serve between 8 and 12 hours per week.

A deacon's regular work schedule includes working Sundays at the altar, four Sundays away per year. The Sundays away should be arranged in advance with the supervising priest. Additional Sundays are to be negotiated with the supervising priest, recognizing that the deacon's role is non-stipendiary and lenience should be granted where possible. These Sundays away allow for the deacon's self-care or other diocesan work, including serving as a deacon for a bishop's visitation.

In addition to Sunday services and special liturgical occasions, such as Christmas and Holy Week, the deacon works in concert with the priest on social and outreach ministries and the congregation's pastoral needs.

A deacon may also be in charge of training Eucharistic Ministers, eucharistic visitors, lectors, and intercessors. With the priest's leadership, a deacon may coordinate pastoral visits to the sick and shut-in people or other outreach settings such as nursing homes, hospitals, or county jails. The deacon is generally expected to have at least one diaconal ministry outside the congregation. Covenanted hours should also include any service on diocesan committees and for any diocesan events where clergy are expected by their bishop to attend.

The deacon can also work outside the church, which would not necessarily be supervised by the priest if it is not a congregational ministry.

## Other Covenant Hours

Deacons, insofar as possible, should be aware of the needs and assets of the surrounding community. Deacons may represent a congregation on interfaith clergy organizations or other committees, boards, or events deemed central to the deacon's outreach ministry and mission. They may also be invited to attend vestry/bishop's committee or other committee meetings to make reports on their ministries.

## Family Members

Family members are welcome to attend the church where the deacon is serving. As regular members, they may serve on parish committees. However, congregational bylaws do not allow family members of staff and clergy to serve on the vestry or bishop's committee.

## Deacons in the Liturgy

From the altar out into the world, it is the deacon's essence and role to embody the whole servanthood of Christ, serving as a bridge from the Great Thanksgiving to aiding the poor and marginalized people in the world. This total embodiment begins at the altar in active support to the presider through a range of specific liturgical duties and responsibilities, concluding with the dismissal for all to go out into the world to love and serve the Lord.

When the bishop ordains a deacon, the bishop charges the candidate to "...assist the Bishop and priests in public worship and in the ministration of God's Word and Sacraments...." (BCP page 543). This charge means that the liturgical ministry of a deacon is a ministry of service, as are all the other aspects of diaconal ministry. A deacon does not preside at any Eucharistic liturgy because the ministry of presidency is the bishops' and priests' ministry.

Deacons may officiate at daily offices or other non-Eucharistic services. Historically, the deacon carries out functions that the chief steward or servant exercised in the ancient world household. These are primarily ministries of preparation and proclamation. Such ministers prepared provisions (the deacon sets the table) and served as cupbearers (see Nehemiah 1:11-2:8 or the Rabshakeh in 2 Kings 18); they stood at their Lord's right hand, in an excellent position to pass on announcements to the assembly (the deacon proclaims the Gospel and dismisses the congregation and tends the table and assists in distributing communion elements).

Just as a chief steward is responsible for coordinating other servants' work, deacons (according to Canon III.3.5.c) may be responsible for coordinating the Lay Eucharistic Ministers' altar ministry. Therefore, deacons assist all different ministry-laity orders, bishops, and priests in carrying out their own duties. These ministers are assisted by deacons, and when all orders are functioning according to their proper order, the church displays the fullness and the cooperation of its ministry.

The paper "Concerning the Deacon and the Liturgy" from the Diocese of New York, which is appended to this customary (Appendix II), offers careful consideration of the deacon's liturgical role. The paper presents, in three sections, the liturgical ministry of the diaconate.

**Section 1** surveys the deacon's regular ministry and assisting a bishop or a priest in the church's traditional liturgies.

**Section 2** explores those occasions when deacons perform duties usually done by a bishop or a priest in emergencies. In every case, such permission is granted with a restrictive rubric that reads something like this one governing Palm Sunday: "In the absence of a bishop or priest, the preceding service may be led by a deacon...." (BCP page 272). These permissive rubrics should be understood as allowing deacons to lead services when, due to a genuine emergency, it is absolutely impossible to obtain the ministrations of a priest.

**Section 3** reviews the deacon liturgically assisting the bishop, with specific notes added for deacons assisting Bishop Susan Brown Snook.

## Communion from the Reserved Sacrament

Communion from the Reserved Sacrament given by deacons as part of the congregation's corporate worship (formerly known as "Deacon's Mass") is permitted only under particular circumstances and only with the specific prior authorization of the bishop.

Communion from the Reserved Sacrament for those who, for reasonable cause, cannot be present at a public celebration of the Eucharist is appropriate. The service for "Communion Under Special Circumstances" (BCP page 396) shall be used. It is suitable for the deacon to supervise Lay Eucharistic Visitors.

## Blessings

In offering blessings,

- ❖ Deacons may lay hands upon the shoulder or above the individual, object, or space to be blessed;
  - Use plural pronouns such as "we," "us," and "our," acknowledging the Communion of Saints who stand as witnesses, and
  - Offer gratitude for the person's ministry gifts or ask for Christ's healing love.
- ❖ Words of petition, blessing, or healing are often preceded by the word "May" and without the sign of the cross on the forehead. Examples are Numbers 6:24-26; or the general blessing from "*Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals*."
- ❖ If appropriate, the deacon may also sprinkle holy water (already blessed by a priest), as in receiving the body in a memorial service; or administering healing oil (already blessed by the bishop) in a healing service, or at the bedside of the sick or dying.
- ❖ A deacon may not: pronounce a blessing on anyone or anything; bless the waters of baptism, or give the sign of the cross over the candidate for baptism at the words of

baptism; give a marriage blessing; bless or dedicate any object designated for use in a consecrated space (e.g., wall hangings, a new Gospel Book, or vestments), or consecrate a gravesite.

## Preaching and the Prophetic Voice

A deacon dares to be a prophetic voice to the church concerning the community's needs of the powerless and voiceless people. It is expected that deacons will be included in the preaching rota of the parish to which they are assigned. Because of the unique nature of diaconal ministry, deacons will bring their unique perspective to interpreting scripture and giving voice to the world's needs, hopes, and concerns. Sermons should emphasize servanthood or service or the mission of the church.

## Clerical Attire

Clerical attire (i.e., clergy shirt and collar) is usually reserved for when the deacon performs functions on behalf of the church. Alb and stole shall be worn only when the deacon functions as a deacon in a Eucharistic worship service. If worn, a dalmatic should be in keeping with the vestments worn by others in the service. Cassock and surplice with deacon's stole or tippet are appropriate for non-Eucharistic worship services or when the deacon is not a participant in the altar party.

## Liturgical Acknowledgement of a Deacon's Service

Soon after the deacon's arrival, and in the context of the Sunday liturgy, the priest and the congregation's wardens introduce the deacon to the congregation, with prayers and tokens of welcome for the newly assigned deacon. A letter from the bishop acknowledging the assignment may be read.

The deacon's time of leave-taking should be similarly marked with liturgical celebration, possibly with a bishop's letter.

## Financial Status

- ❖ Most deacons are non-stipendiary, and there are expenses associated with having a deacon. The congregation is expected to pay registration fees, housing (hotel fees), and mileage for diocesan functions. This and any other expenses that the church agrees to pay shall be covered in the Letter of Agreement. Mileage from home to church is not reimbursed (but is tax-deductible).
- ❖ A deacon is restricted from holding additional paid church positions where the deacon is assigned, except with written permission from the bishop.
- ❖ Other expenses relating to the deacon's ministry for the church (e.g., books, materials, tools) should be negotiated before the deacon's assignment. The Letter of Agreement should state whether these expenses are supported fully or partially by the church's budget.

- ❖ The congregation should also provide a deacon's discretionary fund, subject to annual audit, to be spent on alms.

## Leaves

There may be circumstances in which a deacon can be relieved from their ministerial duties. An application for leave should be submitted to the bishop.

## Sabbatical

- ❖ A sabbatical offers a deacon the opportunity to be renewed through an intentional time away from ministry. It includes identified components of spiritual and intellectual growth.
- ❖ All active assigned deacons who have served five (5) years in the Diocese of San Diego are eligible to apply for a sabbatical.
- ❖ A sabbatical shall ordinarily be between three (3) and twelve (12) months in length.
- ❖ It is recommended that the deacon will include spiritual direction during the sabbatical term, including at least one (1) retreat held for at least three (3) days.
- ❖ A written request for a sabbatical is submitted to the bishop, outlining the sabbatical goals and spiritual and intellectual growth components. At the time of the sabbatical application, the deacon may request a grant from the diocese. If the deacon's service has been continuous in a specific parish/agency and if the deacon plans to return to ministry in that parish/agency, it may be appropriate to request financial support from that parish/agency.
- ❖ During a sabbatical, the deacon shall not regularly attend the deacon's assigned church.
- ❖ The deacon will ordinarily return to the deacon's previous assignment after the sabbatical.

## Leave of Absence

- ❖ A leave of absence offers a deacon the opportunity to be temporarily relieved from the deacon's duties.
- ❖ Leave may be granted for health, personal problems, family commitments, temporary transfers in occupation, or temporary dislocation from the diocese.
- ❖ An application for a leave of absence should be submitted to the bishop. During the leave, the deacon should not attend the deacon's assigned parish, perform ministerial duties, or represent the church.

## Inactive Status

- ❖ The bishop may declare the inactive status of a deacon due to particular circumstances.
- ❖ The deacon is expected to stay in regular communication with the bishop, attend clergy or diaconal events whenever possible, and maintain collegiality with the clergy community.

## Deacons Assigned to Congregations in Times of Transition

Diaconal ministry in a time of parish transition is a complex and challenging undertaking. Almost every transition has particular circumstances. When the priest of a congregation resigns or retires, the deacon, with the bishop's permission and in agreement with the congregation's wardens, may elect to remain. If this is the case, these particular issues must be thoroughly explored and creatively addressed by the deacon with the bishop, the wardens, and, if possible, with the former priest before he or she departs; and, with the bishop and wardens continuingly during the transition time.

### The Deacon's Role During Transition

- ❖ Unless congregation and deacon mutually agree, the role of a deacon during a transition remains unchanged. Within two months of the transition, a new Letter of Agreement should be negotiated between the deacon and the congregation's wardens, particularly for any change in responsibilities.
- ❖ The deacon may be consulted on certain aspects concerning diaconal responsibilities for the church profile (e.g., pastoral care, outreach, and community ministries). However, the deacon may not serve on the search committee, be involved in the search process itself, or express any opinion regarding the candidates.
- ❖ During the transition, no matter how extended, the deacon is never to be viewed by the church leaders, parish administrator, or congregation as a decision-maker, or "supply priest," but only as support for those in charge of various functions of the church, and to assist others in keeping ministries on track.

### Responsibility of the Congregation's Wardens

- ❖ The congregation's wardens are responsible for finding supply priests for all liturgical events where the Eucharist is required, weddings, baptisms, and funerals where the eucharist is desired.
- ❖ Marriage counseling should be conducted by the priest who will celebrate the service or the typical manner for that congregation.
- ❖ In the absence of an available priest, the deacon may provide baptismal counseling.

### Assignment of Interim, Priest-in-Charge, or Rector

When an interim, priest-in-charge, vicar or rector is called to the congregation, the bishop, in consultation with the deacon, will reassess the deacon's assignment situation.

# The Deacon's Responsibilities

## Practicing a Rule of Life

The deacon will engage in regular worship and prayer practices, scripture study, an annual retreat, and spiritual direction.

## Tithing

As a matter of spiritual wellness, a deacon is expected to commit to donating a regular financial gift to the church to which they are assigned, a social service ministry of their choice, or a diocesan outreach ministry.

## Clergy Collegiality

Deacons are expected to engage spiritually and socially with other clergy at events such as convocation meetings, clergy conferences, clergy days, and Bishop's Day with the Deacons unless excused by the bishop.

## Continuing Education

Deacons are expected to engage in lifelong formation through regular scripture study and literature. The deacon should include the continuing education undertaken in the past year in the annual letter to the bishop. That continuing education may consist of independent study or classes through the diocese or other resources and learning through clergy and leadership conferences.

## Relocation

When a deacon relocates to or from another diocese and wishes to continue in diaconal service, s/he has two choices:

- 1) S/he may transfer canonical residency to the new diocese. This requires the permission of both bishops, or
- 2) S/he may apply to be licensed to serve as a deacon in the new diocese, requiring the permission of the bishop of that diocese.

For more information, contact the diocesan office.



# Retirement

## Retirement Letter

- ❖ The age for retirement outlined in the canons is 72. A deacon is ordained for life but is expected to submit a letter to the bishop at age 72, retiring or requesting a one-year extension of service.
- ❖ Unless the bishop grants an annual extension in writing, a deacon will be retired from congregational ministry at age 72.
- ❖ Upon retirement, unless an extension is granted by the bishop, a deacon ceases leadership at any congregation. At the priest's direct request, a retired deacon may occasionally function as a deacon in a liturgy. This function is not intended to be regular or consistent.
- ❖ Regardless of whether a deacon retires from active congregational ministry, a deacon may request to continue diaconal community ministry after retirement. This ministry would involve wearing clericals or representing the Diocese of San Diego in the world. The deacon's request to continue diaconal community ministry should be spelled out in the retirement letter to the bishop.
- ❖ Nothing in this section is intended or designed to limit a retired deacon's involvement in service ministries in the world, where the deacon holds no position of authority or representation on behalf of the church.
- ❖ Nothing in this section intends to hinder a retired deacon from living out and into their baptismal covenant to seek and serve Christ in all people.

## Church Attendance

- ❖ In the retirement letter, a deacon should identify where they intend to worship.
- ❖ With the priest's and bishop's concurrence, retired deacons may continue to attend services at the church they served.
- ❖ The deacon cannot assume a leadership position or offer to do functions formerly filled by the deacon after retirement.
- ❖ Under some circumstances, a deacon may be asked to worship at another church.

## Expectations upon Retirement

- ❖ Retired deacons may continue to wear clerical attire or may choose to dress in street clothes.
- ❖ Retired deacons are addressed as "The Rev. (deacon name here)" or "Deacon (name)."
- ❖ If a parish so chooses, they may continue to list the deacon on the staff section of their publications as "The Rev. (deacon name here), Deacon Emeritus" or "Retired."

- ❖ Attendance at the clergy conference and diocesan convention are still expected. Retired deacons who are unable to attend must request an excuse from the bishop in writing.
- ❖ Retired deacons retain seat, voice, and vote at Diocesan Convention as long as they remain canonically and physically present in the diocese.
- ❖ Retired deacons may volunteer or be asked to participate in diocesan activities, commissions, and task forces.
- ❖ Any change of status must be formally requested of and approved by the bishop.
- ❖ Retired deacons are expected to submit an annual report to the Bishop by March 1.
- ❖ The bishop is the pastor of retired clergy as much as of active clergy. Retired deacons are asked to communicate with the bishop's office when seeking pastoral care of any kind.

## Forms of Clerical Address

Full Title:	The Reverend (Name), [Deacon]- optional The Venerable (name), [Archdeacon] - optional
Abbreviated Title:	The Rev. (Name), [Deacon or Archdeacon] - optional
Letter Salutation:	Dear Deacon, Dear Archdeacon, [Jones]
In Conversation:	Deacon, Archdeacon [Jones]

## The Deacon's Charge

"Every Christian is called to follow Jesus Christ, serving God the Father, through the power of the Holy Spirit. God now calls you to a unique ministry of the full and sacred servanthood of Jesus directly under your bishop. In the name of Jesus Christ, you serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely.

"As a deacon in the church, you are to study the Holy Scriptures, to seek nourishment from them, and to model your life upon them. You are to make Christ and his redemptive love known, by your word and example, to those among whom you live, and work, and worship. You are to interpret to the church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world." (*Book of Common Prayer, Ordination of a Deacon.*)

## Appendix I

### Model Letter of Agreement (LOA)/Term Sheet

Dear Deacon:

It is with great pleasure that I affirm your assignment as a deacon (retired/active) at the parish of St-\_\_\_\_\_ Episcopal Church. This letter of agreement is not meant to be all-inclusive, but the initial framework describing your ministry and your relationship with the rector, vestry, and members of St. \_\_\_\_\_. As such, it is expected that this document will be modified over time to better express this ministry as it blossoms into fruition, growing and changing into all God intends it to be.

I have assigned you to the staff of \_\_\_\_\_ Episcopal Church with the consent and invitation of the Rev. \_\_\_\_\_. Under the direction of the Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ you will have the following ministry responsibilities

**Worship:** Exercise your diaconal role at all Sunday, weekday, and special liturgies in accordance with the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer, to include:

- As deacon of the Word, proclaiming the Gospel, bidding the Prayers of the People, bidding the confession, and dismissing.
- As deacon of the Table, setting the table.
- Being included regularly on the preaching rota.

#### Pastoral Care/Offices:

- Making calls on the sick and shut-in, as necessary.
- Officiating at liturgies of the hours.
- Officiating at burials.
- Supervising and organizing the ministry of Eucharistic Visitors and arranging for Eucharistic Visitor training when necessary.
- Composing or directing the composition of the weekly Prayers of the People.

**Christian Initiation:** Participating in the preparation of candidates for Holy Baptism, Confirmation, and First Communion.

**Outreach:** Overseeing and assisting in ministries of the parish that serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick and the lonely.

#### Administration:

- Attending regular staff meetings when possible.
- Providing articles and announcements for the newsletter, website, e-blasts, and bulletins as appropriate.

In addition to your ministry at St. \_\_\_\_\_ Episcopal Church, you are under my direction and will perform other duties and services for the Diocese of San Diego. These duties may require you to be absent from St. \_\_\_\_\_ Episcopal Church from time to time. It is understood you may have secular employment, which provides a portion of your financial support and family obligations. A continuing dialog between you and the priest will be necessary to balance your schedule that is mutually beneficial to you and the parish.

Your position with the parish is non-stipendiary; however, we will reimburse all your church-related travel and incidental expenses to include membership in the Association for Episcopal Deacons and attendance at the following: diocesan convention, triennial for the Episcopal Deacons, clergy conference, the annual deacons' retreat and one continuing education event per year.

**St. \_\_\_\_\_ Episcopal Church may apply for a grant from the diocese if paying for these items will present a hardship.**

You will have three weeks' vacation per year, including five Sundays. Your scheduled workweek is three days. You are expected to preserve at least one continuous 24-hour period each week for personal use.

Duties and responsibilities may be added, removed, or modified provided you and the rector both agree. Should the priest change, this agreement will remain in effect until renegotiated.

Because Deacon \_\_\_\_\_ is retired/active, it is necessary to resubmit these documents one year from the date of this agreement for approval of Bishop Susan to continue the deacon's ministry at St. \_\_\_\_\_ **Episcopal Church.**

By signing below, you, the rector, and the senior warden agree to work in partnership under the terms of this agreement. May God grant you success in your future joint ministry.

Faithfully yours,

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Susan Brown Snook  
Bishop of San Diego

**AGREED TO:**

\_\_\_\_\_, Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Deacon

\_\_\_\_\_, Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Priest-in-Charge

\_\_\_\_\_, Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Bishop's Committee

\_\_\_\_\_, Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Senior Warden

**CONCURRENCE:**

\_\_\_\_\_, Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Archdeacon

Deacon's Term  
Sheet

**The Rev.** \_\_\_\_\_ **Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Church:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Episcopal Church**  
**Position** \_\_\_\_\_ **Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Effective** \_\_\_\_\_ **Deacon**  
**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Estimated per week work hours:** \_\_\_\_\_ **15**  
**Prorated calculation for part-time:** \_\_\_\_\_ **37.50%**  
**Agreement termination date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**REIMBURSEMENTS**

**Reimbursements upon presentation of acceptable mileage log**

Required diocesan events  
 Pastoral calls as outlined in the letter of agreement

**Reimbursement upon presentation of acceptable receipts**

Association for Episcopal Deacons (AED) Membership (\$50.00/year)		\$50.00
Costs to attend diocesan convention	up to	\$400.00
Costs to attend Association for Episcopal Deacons triannual gathering	up to	*\$500.00
Costs to attend clergy conference	up to	\$400.00
Costs to attend annual deacon retreat	up to	\$300.00
Costs to attend one continuing education event/year	up to	\$1,000.00
<b>Expenses related to their ministry where assigned, upon supervising priest's approval of acceptable expense report</b>		<b>\$ -</b>

\* \$1,500 every 3 years

**NOTE:** Amounts indicated are estimates, subject to approval by vestry or bishop's committee. Churches may apply for a diocesan grant, if they can substantiate their inability to pay for the above costs

**LEAVE**

Type	Hours	
Annual, prorated*	60	including 5 Sunday absences
Sabbatical **	30	for each year of service
Professional Development	15	
Other		in general, no more than one week is expected

\*Leave capped at 90 Prorated part or full-time rate of 240 hours

\*\*Available after third service year

Holidays as provided in diocesan personnel policies

**APPROVALS**

Deacon \_\_\_\_\_ Priest \_\_\_\_\_ Sr. Warden \_\_\_\_\_ Archdeacon \_\_\_\_\_ Bishop \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix II

### Concerning the Role of the Deacon in Liturgy

*The following diaconal liturgical practices are referenced in the Book of Common Prayer. While some of these practices are uncommon to this diocese, congregations are encouraged to demonstrate the role of each clergy form, deacon, priest, or bishop in the church's liturgy.*

#### Section 1. Deacon's Regular Ministry Assisting Bishops, Priests in Traditional Liturgies

##### The Daily Office

- ❖ Anyone may lead the four offices provided in the Book of Common Prayer. This includes deacons, who may, from time to time, be called upon to officiate at **Morning Prayer, an Order of Service for Noon Day, Evening Prayer, and Compline.**
- ❖ However, before a deacon assumes the officiant's role regularly, the deacon should reflect upon the fact that these offices, having their origin in the monastic tradition, were traditionally the ministry of the laity. It may be better for deacons to serve as instructors, teaching lay officiants how to lead the office rather than taking on this ministry themselves.
- ❖ In the **Order of Worship for the Evening**, the deacon is to dismiss the congregation.
- ❖ When Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer takes the place of the ministry of the Word of God at the Eucharist, note that the reading from the Gospels, required by the rubrics, need not necessarily be read by a deacon. In this context, it may be read by a layperson, and a person of whatever order reading it should remember that it is announced and concluded as a reading at Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer, not as the Holy Gospel at the Eucharist.

##### The Great Litany

In the Great Litany, a deacon may lead the litany and might sing it on solemn occasions.

##### The Holy Eucharist

In the Holy Eucharist,

- ❖ The deacon may say the exhortation in BCP page 316.
- ❖ The deacon may say the Decalogue in the Penitential Order and should bid the Confession of Sin.
- ❖ In Rite I, the deacon may say the Summary of the Law and should offer the Prayer for the

Whole State of Christ's Church.

- ❖ The deacon should invite the Confession of Sin.
- ❖ The deacon may read one or more of the "comfortable words" in BCP page 332.
- ❖ The deacon may lead the "prayer of humble access" in BCP page 337.
- ❖ The deacon's duties in Rite II and in those parts of the eucharistic liturgy common to both rites include:
  - ❖ The deacon always reads or sings the Gospel and should, therefore, carry the Gospel Book in the procession before the liturgy and in the procession to the place from which the Gospel is to be read.
  - ❖ When a deacon is assigned to a congregation by the bishop, a letter of agreement is drafted and signed by the deacon, rector, senior warden, archdeacon and the bishop. In paragraph three of that letter, the deacon is authorized by the bishop to preach sermons, as ordination confers the authority to preach.
  - ❖ Deacons should focus their homilies upon the essential character of their ministry: servanthood to the church, to those in need, particularly to the sick, the poor, and the neglected, and presentation of the needs and hopes of the world to the church. Preaching at the Ember Seasons is especially suitable.
  - ❖ The deacon should have a principal role in creating or leading the Prayers of the People. Forms I, IV, and V of the Prayers of the People in the BCP pages 383, 388, and 389, respectively) are preceded by rubrics that give the deacon priority over other leaders in offering these prayers. In the case of other forms of the Prayers of the People, the deacon may be asked to provide to the intercessor those names and concerns for which prayers are requested. The deacon may also compose and lead intercessions for the Eucharist.
- ❖ The deacon should bid the Confession of Sin.
- ❖ As the Prayer Book states, "Deacons should also serve at the Lord's Table, preparing and placing on it the offerings of bread and wine. Deacons may also elevate the consecrated sacrament at the doxology to the Eucharistic prayer and at "The Gifts of God for the People of God." Where this is the custom, the deacon, as minister of the chalice, elevates the chalice and the celebrant elevates the consecrated bread.
- ❖ The deacon assists in administering Holy Communion. The usual minister of the consecrated bread is a bishop or a priest. If there are insufficient bishops or priests present, then deacons may administer the consecrated bread. The usual minister of the chalice is a deacon. If there are insufficient deacons, then priests or licensed lay persons administer the chalice, as the instructions in the BCP page 408 clarify.
- ❖ Before the Post-Communion Prayer, the deacon, using the form in the *Book of Occasional Services*, gives any Lay Eucharistic Ministers the sacrament to take to the sick and the shut-in.

- ❖ The deacon should assist with or coordinate the ablutions according to the custom of the parish.
- ❖ The dismissal is always to be said or sung by the deacon. The tradition associated with diaconal dismissal is ancient.
- ❖ Alleluias are always added to the dismissal during Eastertide.
- ❖ It was, and to some extent still is, the deacon's role in giving directions during the liturgy. Vestiges of this directional ministry include the dismissals and the biddings to kneel and to rise during the Solemn Collects of the Good Friday Liturgy.
- ❖ The deacon should be aware of the different options and requirements for concluding the liturgy in Rite I and in Rite II.
  - In Rite I, the dismissal is optional, but the blessing is mandatory.
  - In Rite II, the blessing is optional and the dismissal mandatory.
- ❖ Where deacons are present, we encourage the dismissal's use even when it is not absolutely required.



## Section 2. When Deacons Perform Duties Usually Done by a Bishop or a Priest

### Communion Under Special Circumstances

As the Book of Common Prayer explains, "This form is intended for use with those who for a reasonable cause cannot be present at a public celebration of the Eucharist" (page 396). The entire rite may be done by a deacon, who should pay careful attention to the rubric on page 398, which requires that a deacon leading this liturgy change the absolution into a pardon prayer, the pronouns from second person plural to the first-person plural. The deacon concludes the rite with a dismissal, not with a blessing.

### Congregational Communion from the Reserved Sacrament in the Absence of a Priest

On infrequent occasions, this liturgy may be celebrated to meet the emergency need of a congregation where the ministrations of a priest have, at the last minute, become unavailable. On such occasions, a deacon is to notify the bishop. If such notification is impossible, the deacon proceeds using prudent judgment and informs a bishop following the liturgy.

### Proper Liturgies for Special Days

#### Ash Wednesday

- ❖ In the Ash Wednesday liturgy, the deacon is to read the Gospel as he or she would do at any celebration of the Eucharist.
- ❖ A deacon may assist with the imposition of ashes and the recitation of Psalm 51, which is meant to accompany the imposition of ashes.
- ❖ The deacon is expected to perform those regular ministries associated with the celebration of the Eucharist as outlined above if that rite is to follow.

#### Palm Sunday

- ❖ In the Palm Sunday liturgy, the deacon reads the triumphal entry Gospel and bids the procession.
- ❖ At the Eucharist, which follows, the Gospel is the Passion of the Lord. Rubrics allow it to be read or sung by persons other than the deacon; however, the deacon might organize such a dramatic reading or chanting of the Gospel and participate. It is particularly suitable for the deacon to be the narrator. The deacon's functions in the Eucharist, which follow, are those previously outlined.

## Maundy Thursday

In the Maundy Thursday service, the deacon should assist with the foot-washing.

## Good Friday

In the Good Friday liturgy, the deacon may assist in the proclamation of the passion as outlined above in the notes on Palm Sunday.

- ❖ At the Solemn Collects, the deacon and the celebrant have a cooperative role. The deacon reads or sings the biddings which precede the prayers ("Dear People of God...according to their needs," BCP page 277).
- ❖ The deacon also reads or sings the biddings, which introduce each of the five categories of prayers asked of the congregation: The Church, the nations of the earth, the sick and suffering, the mission of the church, and the dead. (For example, in the section for the church's mission, the deacon would sing or read, "Let us pray for all who have not received the Gospel of Christ...and lead them to faith and obedience." Then, the deacon might bid the congregation kneel in silent prayer and then arise. Finally, the celebrant would conclude the section by singing or saying the prayer, "Merciful God, creator of all...one shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.") The music for these texts is found in the Altar Service Book section called "Proper Liturgies for Special Days."
- ❖ If a cross is brought into the church (see the rubric in BCP page 281), the deacon may carry it. The deacon prepares the altar for Communion from the Reserved Sacrament, bids the General Confession, and assists in administering Holy Communion.

## Holy Saturday

In the liturgy for Holy Saturday, the deacon may read the conclusion of the Passion Gospel and might lead the anthem, "In the Midst of Life."

## The Great Vigil of Easter

- ❖ The deacon always carries the Paschal Candle in the opening procession of the Great Vigil of Easter and says or sings the *lumen Christi*.
- ❖ The deacon sings the *Exsultet*; if the deacon cannot sing, they could say it or could cense and circumambulate the Paschal Candle as another minister sings the *Exsultet*.
- ❖ If baptism is to be celebrated, the deacon takes the role outlined below in the Holy Baptism section.
- ❖ At the Easter Vigil Eucharist, the deacon should perform all those ministries outlined above in the Holy Eucharist section.
- ❖ The deacon should note that the dismissal at Eastertide is followed by alleluias, not preceded by them (see *The Hymnal 1982*, S-175 and S-176).

- ❖ As these alleluias are an essential seasonal variation for Easter, the deacon should ensure that they are used throughout the Great Fifty Days of Easter.

## Other Rites

### Holy Baptism

- ❖ In Holy Baptism, the deacon reads the Gospel.
- ❖ The deacon might preach the sermon, providing that such a sermon always reflects some aspect of servant ministry.
- ❖ The deacon might lead the Prayers for the Candidates and carry the Paschal Candle to and from the font.
- ❖ A deacon may fill the font and present to the newly baptized a candle lighted from the Paschal Candle. For other diaconal duties on the four great Baptismal Days, see the Holy Baptism.
- ❖ If the bishop or priest's ministry cannot be obtained in emergencies, the bishop may specially authorize a deacon to preside at a baptism. In that case, the deacon omits the prayer over the candidates and the Chrismation, BCP page 308, and the formula and action which follow. Those omitted portions of the rite may be administered on some subsequent occasion of public baptism at which a bishop or priest presides.

### Confirmation

- ❖ In the Confirmation liturgy, a deacon reads the Gospel.
- ❖ A deacon might be a presenter of candidates for Confirmation.
- ❖ If the Baptismal Litany on BCP pages 305-6 is to be used, the deacon might sing or say it.
- ❖ A deacon is to perform the other diaconal functions at the Eucharist, which may follow Confirmation, as outlined above.

### A Form of Commitment to Christian Service

- ❖ There are no diaconal roles prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer in the liturgy for a Form of Commitment to Christian Service.
- ❖ Because the liturgy emphasizes service, an essential aspect of deacons' ministry, a deacon might present the candidate before the offertory and might lead the prayer permitted in the second rubric on BCP page 421.

## Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage

- ❖ The BCP page 422 allows a deacon to perform a wedding when civil law permits and no bishop or priest is available. The deacon performs the service up to and **not** including the Blessing of the Marriage. Before agreeing to perform the marriage ceremony, the deacon will consult with the bishop.
- ❖ Nonetheless, the deacon has a full and rich role as a servant minister in the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage. A deacon may deliver the charge and ask for the declaration of consent.
- ❖ A deacon always reads the Gospel and might preach the homily, remembering that servant ministry is still a deacon's homiletic theme.
- ❖ It is very appropriate for a deacon to lead the prayers for the couple in BCP page 429.
- ❖ If a nuptial Eucharist is to be celebrated, the deacon should exercise the full diaconal ministry in that part of the liturgy, including preparing the altar, elevating the consecrated species, administering Holy Communion, ablutions, and dismissal of the congregation, as outlined above.
- ❖ In cases where the deacon has a special pastoral relationship with the couple, the liturgy should be planned in such a way as to give the deacon the maximum liturgical role as outlined above.
- ❖ Even at liturgies which are personal and pastoral in character, such as weddings, we hope to show to our congregations, and to those who visit our churches, the fullness of Christian ordained ministry, each order functioning in its proper way and working together to build up the body of Christ.

## The Blessing of a Civil Marriage

- ❖ In the Blessing of a Civil Marriage, the deacon reads the Gospel at the Ministry of the Word of God. The prayers for the couple, found in the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage in BCP page 429, may also be used in this liturgy, and it is appropriate for the deacon to lead them.
- ❖ The deacon performs the normal diaconal functions outlined above if a Eucharist is to follow.

## An Order for Marriage

The Order for Marriage liturgy may not be undertaken by a deacon without the bishop's specific approval and direction.

## Thanksgiving for a Child

In the liturgy for Thanksgiving for a Child, a deacon may lead the psalm or canticle prescribed in BCP pages 441-3.

## The Reconciliation of a Penitent

There is no typical role for a deacon in the liturgy for the Reconciliation of a Penitent because of its private nature. The ministry of absolution is the ministry of the episcopate and the priesthood.

In an extreme emergency, a deacon might hear a confession and offer a prayer for pardon, such as the one which appears at the bottom in BCP page 448.

## Ministration to the Sick

- ❖ The deacon
  - May lead the entire Ministration to the Sick service with these exceptions. The deacon substitutes a prayer for pardon for the absolution in BCP page 455.
  - May anoint the sick only in circumstances where a priest or bishop is not available.
  - May administer Holy Communion from the reserved sacrament beginning with the Peace and the Lord's Prayer in BCP page 398. Note that, because this is a private ministration rather than regular public worship, the restrictions outlined above concerning communion from the reserved sacrament do not apply.
- ❖ A deacon is expected to undertake the ministration to the sick as a regular part of the diaconal service.
- ❖ A deacon concludes this rite not with a blessing but with one of the dismissals.
- ❖ A deacon may not bless oil.

## Ministration at the Time of Death

- ❖ A deacon may lead all of the Ministration at the Time of Death service, which provides the dying the "last rites" of the church. A deacon may anoint with oil in the absence of a priest or bishop.
  - *Vigil of the dead:* A deacon may lead all of this service, BCP page 465.
  - *Reception of the body,* BCP page 466: A deacon may lead all of this liturgy. If a deacon is assisting a priest, it would be suitable for the deacon to carry the Paschal Candle before the coffin as it is brought into the church.

## The Burial of the Dead

- ❖ The deacon may sing or say the opening anthems for the Burial of the Dead and may carry the Paschal Candle in the opening procession.
- ❖ A deacon always reads the Gospel and might lead the psalm when it cannot be sung.
- ❖ A deacon could preach the homily, remembering that a eulogy is never appropriate for reasons thoroughly explained in our document *Concerning Funerals*.

- ❖ A deacon may lead the Prayers of the People. If a Eucharist is to follow, a deacon should do the normal deacon's functions in that liturgy. The deacon usually carries the Paschal Candle out of the church ahead of the coffin.
- ❖ When the ministry of a priest or a bishop cannot be obtained or authorized by the bishop or supervising priest, a deacon can preside at the entire liturgy, which is then curtailed according to the rubric on the BCP page 496. After the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer is said, other prayers are added, the Commendation follows (only if the corpse is present), and the dismissal is added. The deacon must consult with the bishop and get permission before agreeing to lead a funeral service.

### The Committal

A deacon may do the entire Committal liturgy.

### An Order for Burial

A deacon must not organize an Order for Burial liturgy under these guidelines without a bishop or a priest's direction.

### Deacons in Institutions and Rural Areas

- ❖ Deacons serving as chaplains in institutions minister in particular circumstances where unusual demands may be made of diaconal ministry. Such ministry needs to be developed following the Bishop of San Diego's directions and the pastoral care staff of the institution where the deacon serves.
- ❖ Similarly, deacons serving in rural areas will carry out their ministry under the bishop's direction, and such other supervising clergy as the bishop may appoint to assist the deacon.

### Ministry of a Deacon in Emergencies

#### The Daily Office

- ❖ Suppose a priest is not present at the recitation of the Daily Office. In that case, a deacon replaces the absolution following the Confession of Sin with a prayer for corporate pardon by changing the pronouns from the second person to the first-person plural.
- ❖ In the Order of Worship for the Evening, the deacon, in the absence of a priest, reads the Prayer for Light.

#### The Holy Eucharist

- ❖ Concerning the consecrated bread, the regular minister of Holy Communion at the Eucharist is a bishop or a priest. In the absence of sufficient bishops or priests, a deacon may administer the consecrated bread.

- ❖ As indicated above, a deacon may administer Holy Communion from the reserved sacrament as a public worship service using the outline of instructions in BCP page 408 under the guidelines indicated, if so authorized by the bishop.

## Proper Liturgies for Special Days

### Ash Wednesday

In the absence of a bishop or priest, the entire Ash Wednesday liturgy outlined in BCP pages 264-9 may be led by a deacon. In such a case, the deacon kneels after the Litany of Penitence and says the prayer for pardon from Morning Prayer.

### Palm Sunday

In the absence of a bishop or priest, the whole Palm Sunday liturgy outlined in BCP pages 270-3 may be led by a deacon.

### Maundy Thursday

Absent a bishop or priest, the Maundy Thursday liturgy may not be celebrated. A deacon should lead, or cause to be led, a liturgy of the Daily Office.

### Good Friday

Absent a bishop or priest, the Good Friday liturgy outlined in BCP pages 276-282 may be led by a deacon.

### Holy Saturday

Absent a bishop or a priest, the Holy Saturday liturgy, as outlined in BCP page 283, may be led by a deacon.

### The Great Vigil of Easter

Absent a bishop or priest, a deacon may lead the first two parts of the Great Vigil of Easter service, the Lighting of the Paschal Candle and the Liturgy of the Word, followed by the Renewal of Baptismal Vows, and the Ministry of the Word of God from the Easter Eucharist, concluding with the Prayers of the People, the Lord's Prayer, and the Dismissal with Alleluias.

### Holy Baptism

In an emergency, a deacon, or a layperson, may baptize using the form in BCP pages 313-4. The great baptismal days are the Easter Vigil, Pentecost, All Saints' Day, or the Sunday following All Saints' Day and the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. On these days, if the ministry of a bishop or a priest cannot be obtained, the bishop may authorize a deacon to preside at Holy Baptism in the case of a pastoral emergency. In such a case, the deacon omits the prayer for the candidates and

the chrismation in BCP page 308.

### **The Reconciliation of a Penitent**

In an extreme emergency, a deacon may hear a person's confession and offer a prayer for pardon, such as the one which appears in BCP at the bottom of page 448.

### **Ministration to the Sick**

While the deacon may lead most of the liturgy of Ministration to the Sick, as outlined above, the deacon may anoint the sick only in emergency circumstances in which a bishop or a priest is not available.



## Section 3. Serving with the Bishop

- ❖ When the bishop is the celebrant, the deacon should perform all functions reserved for the deacon. Also, the bishop's chaplain should be a deacon, if possible. In processions, the deacon(s) immediately precede the bishop.
- ❖ As the Bishop's Deacon, the deacon assists the bishop for all aspects of the visitation, including:
  - Assist the bishop in arriving and setting up and upon departure.
  - Assist in assuring things run smoothly.
  - Offer to point the presider's book.
  - Routinely, the deacon stands on Bishop Susan Brown Snook's left.
  - Sets and clears the table as is the deacon's usual Sunday practice.
  - Before the bishop moves, hand the bishop the crozier and miter as needed. When the bishop stops moving, take the crozier and miter.
  - After the Eucharist, retrieve the miter and crozier and bring them to where the bishop will pronounce the blessing.

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