

Customary for Presbyters Concerning Diocesan Deacons

Visitations Concerning Their Missionary Work

1st Edition

2013-14



Diocese of Western Michigan

Robert R. Gepert

Bishop

The Call to Diaconal Ministry

Through their ordination vows, deacons place themselves under order to follow Jesus and to be obedient to the Bishop. The Bishop often gives individual deacons a mandate to serve the entire diocese, concentrating on one particular ministry and encouraging congregational support and developing diocesan servant ministry and mission in this area. These deacons are called out to be prophetic voices to the church, calling the people of God into accountability for the needs of the poor, the weak, the sick and the lonely. They minister as leaders, teachers, and mentors.

Authority

The deacon shall have a written covenant agreement signed by the Bishop when serving as a diocesan deacon. The agreement is renewed every two years. The contents of the agreement follow an outline provided by the Bishop's office in the *Customary for Deacons, Appendix A*. The Bishop sends diocesan deacons out to parishes for presentations, teaching, preaching, and promoting mission and ministry opportunities in the Diocese, in the U.S.A., in the Dominican Republic and the world.

Welcoming a Deacon

A deacon is a baptized person called and empowered by God and the church to be a model of Christ's servant ministry for all people. As agents of God's compassion and reconciling grace, deacons are missionaries to the world's needs, hopes, and concerns. Deacons are bridges from the world to the church and back again--they are living symbols.

A visiting deacon is an ambassador of the Bishop and should be welcomed to the table as such!

Protocol

On visitations, deacons will wear clerical collars when assisting at the Liturgy. They must wear an insignia of the diaconal order to distinguish them from presbyters. Albs and stoles should be worn only when the deacon is functioning at the altar. All vestments should be in keeping with vestments worn by other clergy.

It is assumed that all clergy will be knowledgeable and observant of the canons of the church. A deacon's roles within the service are spelled out in the service rubrics. They include:

- Reading the Gospel
- May lead the Prayers of the People
- Leading the Confession of Sin
- Receive offerings of bread and wine, and money or other gifts
- Prepare the Holy Table for the Eucharist
- Stand on the right-hand side of the celebrant and one step back from the altar, ready to serve if needed
- Assist in the administration of the Sacrament
- Perform ablutions following the communion of the people or place the chalice paten, etc. on the credence table for ablutions after the Mass according to the parish custom.
- Dismiss the people (with alleluias used from the Easter Vigil through the Day of Pentecost.)

Special additional information may be found in the Book of Common Prayer, pp. 406-409.