

# DEACONS

*“The permanent Diaconate is an important enrichment for the mission of the Church. Since the munera proper to deacons are necessary to the Church’s life, it is both convenient and useful... that men who are called to a truly diaconal ministry in the Church, whether liturgical or pastoral, charitable or social, ‘be strengthened by the imposition of hands, which has come down from the Apostles, and more closely united to the altar so as to exercise their ministry more fruitfully through sacramental grace of the diaconate.’” (Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons, Introduction 3)*

Note: This policy pertains to deacons, married or single (celibate) who are not transitional deacons. In the past the term “permanent” was used to refer to them. Now, however, the presumption is that the term “deacon” refers to permanent deacons rather than to those who have been ordained to the diaconate with the purpose of being advanced to priestly ordination (i.e., “transitional” deacon).

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### **Assignment and Reassignment**

1. A deacon is initially assigned by the diocesan bishop on the day of ordination. Assignment is based on the needs of the diocese and the particular charisms of the deacon. A deacon is not assured of being assigned to his own parish community upon ordination and should not presume this assignment.
2. The reassignment of a deacon may be initiated by the diocesan bishop or the deacon. When it is initiated by the deacon, he will state his reasons in writing to the bishop indicating an alternate assignment, and also stating the reasons why the assignment would be beneficial to all concerned. The primary consideration in all assignments will be the needs of the diocese.

### **Ministry Plan**

1. According to his assignment, each deacon will be under the supervision of a ministry supervisor. A ministry plan between the deacon and supervisor will be formulated under

the guidance of the director of the diaconate and will be signed by all three parties. The ministry plan will be reviewed on occasion.

### **Faculties**

1. Upon ordination a deacon will be granted all those faculties as outlined in the document *Faculties Granted to Deacons*.

### **Personal and Ministerial Needs**

1. The director of the diaconate program is the diocesan liaison to the deacons and their wives. Ordinarily, concerns will be processed through the director.

### **Remuneration**

1. Ordinarily, the deacon will not be an employee of the diocese or the parish of assignment. Ministerial expenses will be reimbursed by the diocesan office or by the parish that received his services. This may include such items as mileage reimbursement for the use of a privately owned vehicle and the purchase and replacement of a deacon's vestments.
2. A deacon may accept a stipend given to him for sacramental services, such as a baptism, marriage or graveside service. This is to be considered taxable income.
3. In the exceptional case in which a deacon is considered an employee, a just wage and expense reimbursement will be negotiated.

### **Honorarium** (Administrative Decree 22 May 2001)

1. Deacons who provide liturgical service outside of their parish of residence and/or assignment are entitled to a stipend of \$50 per service plus roundtrip mileage at current IRS rate. This would not apply when a deacon provides a service at his own volition (such as a family or friend funeral or wedding).
2. For services of a non-liturgical nature, a stipend should be negotiated between the deacon and the parish for which the service is provided. In addition, mileage at the current IRS rate is due to the deacon.

### **Ongoing Formation**

1. The diocese will support the deacon's ongoing formation from the clergy formation accounts (seminary burses, etc.) in the following ways:
  - a. Each deacon (and his wife) is entitled to attend one workshop or conference per year. The diocese will pay only the registration fee of the deacon (and his wife). Travel expenses and room and board will be the responsibility of the deacon.
  - b. If a deacon (and his wife) is chosen to represent the diocese at a workshop or conference, the registration, travel expenses and room and board will be paid by the diocese.
  - c. Each deacon is required to make an annual retreat. Retreat expenses will be paid by the diocese for the deacon (and his wife if she chooses to participate).
  - d. The deacon is expected to attend quarterly formation meetings scheduled by the diaconate director. The deacon's wife is encouraged to participate in these meetings.

### **Liturgical Attire**

1. The alb and stole, and the dalmatic if possible, will be the usual liturgical vestments of the deacon in this diocese. The dalmatic is especially appropriate when serving with the

bishop at liturgy, as well as for other solemn occasions. Diocesan vestments are available for these occasions.

2. At episcopal liturgical celebrations or ceremonies when it is appropriate for the priests to assemble and be vested as a college, it is equally appropriate for deacons to be present as an order, vested in alb and stole, and seated in a special assigned place. If at the less-solemn occasion the deacons are invited to be seated with their families, they will be attired in their normal suits.
3. When a deacon presides at benediction or the Liturgy of the Hours, he may wear the cope over the alb and stole. When a deacon presides at wake or graveside ceremonies, the normal attire will be a regular business suit. It is fitting, although not necessary, for a deceased deacon to be vested in alb, stole and dalmatic for his funeral.

### **Ministerial Attire**

1. Ordinarily, ministerial attire for deacons is appropriate secular dress according to good taste and standards. In an exceptional case, if it is deemed necessary or expedient for a deacon to gain entry to a particular ministerial environment (such as a prison), the deacon may request permission from the diocesan bishop in writing to wear clerical garb. If granted, the deacon may only wear such attire while involved in that particular aspect of ministry for which the bishop gave permission.

### **Title**

1. The title of spoken address for a deacon is “Deacon (name).” In writing, a deacon may be addressed as above or by his normal secular address (e.g., Mr., Dr., etc.) “Reverend Mister” is used only for transitional deacons.

### **Counseling**

1. According to Kansas law, as an ordained minister a deacon is afforded the privilege of refusing to testify in civil divorce court proceedings regarding communications entrusted to him in his capacity as deacon when those communications are made confidentially and for the purpose of seeking spiritual advice and counseling. For example, it seems that a deacon could not be subpoenaed to testify in a civil divorce proceeding even when, in the context of earlier counseling with the couple, admissions relevant to the issues of the case were made.
2. This privilege does not extend to the deacon’s wife. Therefore, extreme care should be taken if the deacon’s wife assists in counseling settings, which by their very nature imply this type of confidentiality.

### **Liturgy of the Hours**

1. Although deacons are not bound by the universal church law to pray the Liturgy of the Hours in its entirety, they should not hold themselves lightly excused from the obligation they have to pray Morning and Evening Prayer.

### **Dispensation from Celibacy**

1. In the case of the death of a deacon’s wife and the desire of the deacon to remarry, the diocesan bishop will follow current ecclesiastical law in discerning whether or not to submit his petition for a dispensation to the Holy See.