

## RESOLUTION OF PERMANENT FORCE

### THIS SYNOD

#### NOTING THAT

- a) The threefold order of Bishops Priests and Deacons, is part of our foundational statement as the Church.
- b) There has been a world-wide movement since the 1980's to re-establish the Ministry of Deacons in the Anglican Communion as well as the Roman catholic Church.
- C) The Ministry of the Deacon brings great power to the ministry of the Church.

#### RESOLVES THE FOLLOWING;

#### GUIDELINES ON THE MINISTRY OF DEACONS.

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##### I. Intent of These Guidelines

These guidelines are set forth to articulate a normative understanding of diaconal ministry (i.e., its form and function) in the Diocese of The Highveld. These norms pertain to those called to serve the Church as Deacons, and not those serving as "transitional Deacons" in whom a vocation to the Priesthood has been discerned, and are preparing for ordination to the Priesthood.

In all that follows the term "Deacon" is used to refer to those who are serving under licence from the Bishop, and does not include Deacons who are retired or otherwise not licensed.

##### 2., The Nature of the Diaconate

The understanding of diaconal ministry set forth herein is grounded in the tradition of the church as reflected in the Canons and Constitutions of the ACSA and the Anglican Prayer Book 1989 of the ACSA (hereinafter referred to as APB '89).

##### 2.1 Deacons as leaders of the laity in service.

Diaconal ministry is characterized chiefly by service, both in the Church and in the world. As servant ministers, Deacons (and those who aspire to ordination to the Diaconate) should exemplify in their lives a spirit of service to others, including a dedication to helping others enter into the ministry of Christian service. Ordination to the diaconate is not the way we recognize or validate existing ministries; it is rather a means of forming ministers of the Gospel whose call it is to model the servant ministry of Christ to all the baptized. Deacons are not ordained to do outreach ministry on behalf of the Church, but to be an example of prophetic servant ministry and to lead all members of the Church into servant ministry in the world.

##### 2.2 Deacons as bringing the needs of the world to the church.

Deacons also help interpret the needs and concerns of the world to the Church.

3. **Term of office as a Deacon.**

Deacons will minister under a license from the Bishop. This license will ordinarily expire at the age of 68 but the Bishop may extend the license for a year at a time thereafter at the request of the pastoral charge under whom the Deacon is ministering (e.g. Rector and parish Council if ministering in a parish situation).
4. **Responsibilities of the Deacon.**

The Bishop may designate a Deacon to serve as a parochial Deacon, or a diocesan Deacon to a particular ministry. All Deacons will enter into written agreements that detail the parameters of their specific service and ministry. Parochial Deacons are charged with serving a particular parish or mission; within that context, they work collaboratively with the other clergy serving that parish under the guidance and direction of the Rector or Priest- in-Charge. Diocesan Deacons are charged with actualizing and developing Diocesan ministries and initiatives under the guidance and direction of the Bishop or other designated authority (eg. Director of HABSR). While Deacons are always subject to reassignment to further the work of the Church, under no circumstances shall a Deacon resign or vacate an assignment without the prior approval of the Bishop. Deacons may serve as chaplains in prisons, hospitals, hospices, schools, and other institutions, or as Spiritual directors and counsellors provided they are trained and accredited to do so.
5. **The Relationship of the Deacon to the Parish**

Parochial Deacons serve in a particular parish under the guidance and direction of the Rector, or Priest-in-Charge.. When a new Rector or Priest-in-Charge is appointed, the Deacon shall offer his resignation. The Deacon may be reassigned to the parish or mission by the Bishop. Upon reassignment, the Deacon shall enter into a new written agreement with the parish or mission and the Bishop. All Deacons assigned to a parish shall enter into a Ministry Agreement with the parish and the Rector, or Priest-in-Charge. This agreement must be approved by the Archdeacon and the Bishop and will provide the structure for an annual ministry review. Ordinarily, every agreement will include provision for the following:

  - annually, four weeks of vacation;
  - annually, two weeks for continuing education and diaconal formation;
  - as needed, any days needed for sickness or other debilitation;
  - as needed, any time necessary to develop and maintain self-support outside the Church,
  - a three-month sabbatical leave every 5 to 7 years, (with adequate advance notice); contingent on the Bishop's approval.

The Deacon's primary ministry within the context of a parish should be structured in a manner consistent with the understanding of diaconal ministry set forth above . It is appropriate (though not necessary) for parishes to have a committee to work closely with the Deacon on outreach ministries. It is also appropriate (though not necessary) for the Deacon to be the almoner for the parish and to have a discretionary fund from which to render assistance to those in need.
6. **Relationships among clergy.**

Disagreements between clergy open the possibility for scandal and division within the

Body of Christ. In the event of irreconcilable differences between a Deacon and other clergy with whom the Deacon serves, conflicts should be quickly and discretely brought to the attention of the Archdeacon and the Bishop. Likewise, if problems arise that affect the welfare and unity of the parish, the Deacon shall bring them to the clergy charged with oversight of the parish and shall follow their advice and counsel.

7. Obligations of Deacons

All Deacons are expected to attend all ordinations within the Diocese unless they receive a written excuse from the Bishop.

All Deacons are given the opportunity to renew their ordination vows at the annual Chrism Mass (normally in Holy Week), and are expected to participate in this liturgy. All Deacons will be expected to attend an annual retreat.

Appropriate continuing education should be pursued by Deacons annually.

8. Obligations of Parishes with Deacons

The parish should provide funds for the annual Deacon's Retreat as well as for other continuing education programs, as Deacons are expected to place a high priority on continuing education and formation. Deacons should submit an annual report of continuing education to the responsible diocesan officer.

9. The Deacon and the Decision Making of the Church.

Because the Deacon functions as a symbol of servant ministry and brings the concerns and needs of the world to the attention of the institutional church, the Deacon is expected to have a voice in all decision-making bodies in the Diocese. Deacons may be appointed by the Bishop to diocesan institutions, commissions, committees and task forces. It should be noted that licensed Deacons are by virtue of the Canons ex-officio members of the Parish council in which they are licensed.

10. The Deacon in the Liturgy

10.1 Liturgical service is not the primary ministry of every Deacon. It is however their privilege to proclaim the Gospel whenever they are included in liturgical celebrations.

10.2 All Deacons should as part of their ministry of leading the church in service be given the opportunity to preach from time to time, at least once each quarter.

10.3 Deacons with a calling to the liturgy will act as leaders of the laity in the liturgy, and as such take precedence over licensed lay ministers. In addition to the proclaiming of the Gospel, they may appropriately therefore;

- a) Lead the synaxis including the offering of the prayer for the church.
- b) Prepare the altar and the elements at the offertory
- c) lead the congregation in their response to the Eucharistic prayer in the proclamations (e.g. # 57 page 118 APB "89)
- d) Lead the congregation in the saying (where not sung) of the Agnus Dei and prayer of humble access (#81 page 127).

- e) See to the ablutions of the vessels after the president has done his own post-communion lavabo
- f) Have supervision of the servers, sacristans and all preparations for the celebration of the liturgy.

10.4 Where there are Deacons gifted and called to the liturgical ministry , all Diocesan liturgical celebrations should involve them as above.

10.5 Further liturgical functions of the Deacon at the Eucharist  
Traditionally the deacon assists the President in the liturgy. The following have been recognised as roles of the deacon;

- a). The Deacon carries the Gospel book in procession.
- b) At the offertory when the ministers are being censed, the Deacon censes the President and the Eucharistic minister (old sub-deacon)
- c). The Deacon stands to the President's left during the Eucharistic Prayer, and may assist by pointing to the missal and uncovering the ciborium as requested by the President. (The Eucharistic Minister will stand on the right and assist with the uncovering of the chalice.)
- d). The President hands the chalices to the Deacon and Eucharistic Minister to raise at the invitation to communion.
- e) The Deacon will with the Eucharistic Minister assist in the distribution of the consecrated wine. Where necessary the Deacon may assist with the distribution of the consecrated hosts, either as a second distributor, or where necessary in place of the President. It should be noted that for the President not to distribute the hosts is peculiar and not desirable unless need dictates.

10.6 The Deacon at other liturgies.

- a) Where on duty at the service, The Deacon will carry the Paschal candle in procession at the Easter Vigil, and proclaim the exultet.
- b) The Deacon may lead the prayers for the Candidates for Baptism, Confirmation, and Reception at services of Christian Initiation.
- c). While in the Roman Catholic church the deacon is ordained to administer sacramental blessings, this is not so in the Anglican Communion. Therefore;
  - i) The Deacon may not serve as the minister for the solemnisation of marriage, but may assist in the liturgy, eg. in doing the readings, the introduction, prayers (but not the sacramental prayer viz #18 on page 466) and at a Nuptial Mass proclaim the Gospel and perform other diaconal roles in the liturgy of the Eucharist.
  - ii) The Deacon may conduct the funeral services where there is to be no Funeral mass, but may not bless the ground for burial. Other roles may be assigned as above for marriages.
  - iii) The Deacon may not bless houses, cars and so on.
  - iv) The Deacon may not bless those at the rail at the Eucharist who are not receiving the sacrament of communion.
- d). The Deacon and baptism.  
While the laity are authorised to administer baptism, this is only in

cases of immediate need, e.g where there is a danger that the candidate may die. The same should apply to the Deacon. Under no circumstances should a deacon baptise in the presence of a priest.

11. Liturgical Dress of the deacon.

11.1. During the celebration of the Eucharist.

The Deacon should vest in a manner consistent with the order and with the custom of the parish, with a diaconal stole of the colour of the day worn over the left shoulder over a cassock and alb / surplice / cotta. A dalmatic may also be worn if it is the custom of the parish.

11.2. Assisting at celebrations of sacraments;

The dress is as above though the stole is the colour of the sacrament (white).

11.3. At funerals.

Where a funeral Mass is celebrated, the above dress is indicated with white or black/purple stole. For funerals where there is no funeral Mass the dress will be "choir habit", that is cassock, surplice and scarf (tippet), and hood (optional). (Note a stole is not appropriate at a funeral without the Eucharist, but may be indicated for a burial where the ground is to be blessed. The Deacon would not when assisting wear the stole).

11.4. At other liturgies (eg. the Daily Offices)

The dress is choir habit (see above for funerals) or simply just cassock and surplice/cotta.

12. The use of clerical dress.

It is appropriate for the Deacon to wear clerical dress at all times but required of the Deacon to wear clerical dress when assisting or leading liturgies or ministering generally within the parish / pastoral charge.

13. The Deacon as a Minister of the Reserved Sacrament

Although the Holy Eucharist is the principle act of Christian worship on the Lord's Day and other major feasts, the administration of communion by a Deacon from the Reserved Sacrament is not the norm for such services. Nor is it the norm for the marriage service. The Deacon may, if a Priest is unavailable and with the prior written approval of the Bishop, lead the Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified on Sundays.

The Deacon may, along with the Priests and Eucharistic Visitors of a parish, serve as a minister of the Reserved Sacrament for those who, for reasonable cause, cannot be present at a public celebration of the Eucharist.

14. References and Forms of Address

Those Deacons discerned as called to the Diaconate should be referred to simply as "Deacon," rather than "vocational Deacon" or "permanent Deacon." A Deacon in the process of ordination to the Priesthood should be referred to as a "transitional Deacon." This should be normal usage in all diocesan and parish documents, and all directories, web-sites, and other publications.

All Deacons (transitional deacons included) should be addressed as "Deacon" though

the formal form of address for a Deacon is "The Reverend Deacon / Mr / Mrs / Ms". A Deacon should not be addressed a "Father" or "Mother".

15 Conclusion

These guidelines are meant to assist the people and the clergy of the Diocese of The Highveld in the pursuit of the most effective Christian mission possible. They are intended to outline normative practice for the Deacons of this Diocese and are not intended to address every eventuality. In the vast majority of instances, common sense, humility and Godly intent will result in the most effective and faithful actions by the Deacons of this Diocese.

May God grant us the courage to pursue Christ's mission in the world, and the grace and the faithfulness to accomplish it.

PROPOSED; Fr Tom Amoore

SECONDED Deacon Gwynne Lawlor.