

# Diaconate Personnel Manual

## Diocese of Bridgeport

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December 2, 2018



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By the Grace of God and the Authority of the Apostolic See

Bishop of Bridgeport

DECREE

+ In the name of Our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Having in mind the pastoral care of the Diocese of Bridgeport and the role of Permanent Deacons in this ministry, and in accord with the norms issued by Pope Paul VI in his Apostolic Letter *Ad Pascendum* and the canons of the 1983 Code of Canon Law, I decree the promulgation of The Diaconate Personnel Manual for the Diocese of Bridgeport. This Manual will take effect on the First Sunday of Advent, December 2, 2018, and will be in effect for a period of three years.

Given at Bridgeport on the 2nd day of December, in the Year of Our Lord 2018.

Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano  
Bishop of Bridgeport

Reverend Robert M. Kinnally  
Chancellor

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Diocese of Bridgeport

Bishop Walter W. Curtis ordained the first class of permanent deacons for the Diocese of Bridgeport on February 25, 1978. Since then, over 120 men have been ordained for the diocese. While each of these men expresses his life of service in various ways, all deacons share a common purpose in their ministry. The deacon's ministry is:

... to bring God's Word to believer and unbeliever alike, to preside over public prayer, to baptize, to assist at marriages and officiate at them, to give viaticum to the dying, and to lead the rites of burial. Once he is consecrated by the laying on of hands. . . he will perform works of charity in the name of the Bishop. . . Furthermore [he will] faithfully pray the Liturgy of the Hours daily for the Church and for the whole world.

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Most permanent deacons have family responsibilities and earn their living in the secular world. It is important that the deacon seek balance in his life: being an ordained minister of Christ the Servant in the world, while also performing his duties as spouse, father, son, neighbor, and worker. Such a balance can only be achieved with excellent communication between the deacon and his wife, the bishop, his pastor, and other collaborators in ministry.

This manual is intended to facilitate the desired balance described above by offering an explanation of the deacon's responsibilities in and to the Diocese of Bridgeport by virtue of his assignment, appropriate mutual expectations of the deacon and those in collaborative ministry, their individual and mutual rights, duties, and their anticipated and obligatory mutual fraternal support.

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<sup>1</sup>*The Rites Book Volume II, Ordination of a Deacon, Paragraph 14*

## II. MINISTERIAL DUTIES OF THE DEACON

### A. Vocation and Ministry of the Diaconate

In order to better understand the role and mission of a deacon in the life of the Church, one must begin with the Church's teaching regarding the sacrament of Holy Orders that the deacon receives and shares. The bishops of the United States, in their document *The National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States* (NDPD) (2003), describe the sacrament of Holy Orders in the following way:

Holy Orders is the sacrament through which the mission entrusted by Christ to his apostles and their successors continues to be exercised in the Church until the end of time. Thus, it is the sacrament of apostolic ministry: "The mission of the Apostles. . . is a true service, significantly referred to in Sacred Scripture as '*diakonia*,' namely service or ministry." This *diakonia* "is exercised on different levels by those who from antiquity have been called bishops, priests and deacons."<sup>2</sup>

As an integral part of the sacrament of Holy Orders, the diaconate configures a man to Christ as Servant, constituting him as a member of the hierarchy and sacred minister of Christ with "a distinct identity and integrity in the Church that marks him as neither a lay person nor a priest; rather, the deacon is a cleric who is ordained to *diakonia*, namely, a service to God's people in communion with the bishop and his body of priests."<sup>3</sup>

The deacons of the church are the sacramental sign of Christ's ministry of service on behalf of the Church and the world, serving the discipleship of God's people. Through his witness and service, each deacon is called to be a living icon of Christ the servant, who "did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mt. 20:28, NAB).

In order to live his ministry well, the deacon should be formed by his spiritual participation in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. The deacon must never forget that he does not serve with his gifts and talents alone but through the power of Christ alive in and through his diaconal ministry.

Ministerial opportunities for the deacon whose identity is properly formed in Christ are many. As a close collaborator with his pastor and sharer in Holy Orders, deacons and priests must minister together as brothers in every respect, to help God's people to grow in greater love of Christ and a deeper personal sanctification in service to the world. Each deacon also enjoys a special bond of charity with his bishop, allowing the bishop to care for those most in need through each deacon's ministry of charity and service.

Deacons are also called to create unity, working with and in their community, to build up the Kingdom of God in the world. Diaconal ministry also supports the laity's participation in the

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<sup>2</sup>NDPD, 24

<sup>3</sup>NDPD, 29

apostolic mission of the church. The deacon does not fulfill his obligations by simply doing the work himself; rather he is to facilitate the participation of the people in this important enterprise of the Church. Deacons are called to live and foster “servant leadership” in every aspect of the Church’s life.

The deacon must also serve those who live on the periphery of society, especially the poor and the infirm, the indifferent, the alienated, the unwanted, the disenfranchised and those whom the culture considers expendable.

The liturgical ministry of the deacon should be a reflection of what he does among the People of God outside of the liturgy.

## **B. The Threefold Ministry of the Diaconate**

More specifically, deacons are called to live a threefold ministry in the following way:

### **Ministry of Charity**

Deacons serve as Christ’s heralds of hope and love to the poor, disabled, needy, lonely, forgotten and outcast. Through their witness and service, deacons are to promote works of mercy, justice, reconciliation and peace. In this most important aspect of diaconal service, each deacon must strive to challenge fellow believers to address the social needs of the poor (both material and spiritual) and to meet such needs.

As an ordained participant in the Church’s ministry of charity and justice, the deacon assumes the duties entrusted to him by his Bishop with humility and enthusiasm. At the core of his spirituality, a deacon puts on Christ and is guided by the love of Christ in caring for all in his charge: “Charity is the very soul of ecclesial communion.”<sup>4</sup>

In the prayer of diaconal ordination, the bishop implores God that the deacons may be “full of all the virtues, sincere in charity, solicitous towards the weak and the poor, humble in their service...[and] may...be the image of your Son who did not come to be served but to serve...” Therefore, “by word and example,” the deacon places himself “at the constant service of [his] brothers and sisters.” This service will include diocesan and parochial works of charity, including the Church’s concern for social justice. It will also extend into Christian formation: working with youth and adults in promoting justice and life in all its phases and transforming the world through personal witness in conformity with the Gospel of life and justice. The deacon must strive, therefore, to serve all of humanity “without discrimination, while devoting particular care to the suffering and sinful.” Ultimately, the deacon’s principal *diakonia*– a sign of the Church’s mission – “should bring [all whom he serves] to an

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<sup>4</sup>NDPD, 84

experience of God's love and move [them] to conversion by opening [their] heart[s] to the work of grace."<sup>5</sup>

Other works of charity may include prison ministry, nursing home ministry, helping in soup kitchens, hospital chaplaincy, visiting the homebound or working with immigrants. By virtue of their routine presence in the marketplace, deacons often have the opportunity to be resourceful and accessible in their service.

## **Ministry of the Word**

The deacon is called to be a man of deep prayer, becoming familiar with and a witness to the Word of God in his ministry, among his family and in the workplace. He is to love, preach and teach Sacred Scripture from the pulpit and in his daily life with honesty, integrity, and courage. A deacon is called to teach and catechize his fellow Catholics and help prepare those seeking to receive the sacraments, especially adults seeking initiation into the Catholic Church.

In order to fulfill this ministry, the deacon must always remain a student of God's Word, for only when the Word of God is deeply rooted in his own life can the deacon bring that Word to others. The deacon ought to remember that since he is a member of the hierarchy, his actions and public pronouncements involve the Church and its Magisterium. Therefore, he is obligated to protect the communion and mission that bind him to the Holy Father and his own bishop, especially in his preaching of the Scriptures, the Creed, Catholic teachings and the disciplines of the Church.

The deacon may preach when he is the presiding minister of a sacrament or liturgical rite:

- Appropriate parts of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
- Baptism of Children
- Rite of Marriage
- Visitation and Communion of the Sick
- Funerals: at a Vigil Service or Rite of Christian Burial (apart from Mass) and in the Rite of Committal
- Communion Services
- Liturgy of the Hours
- Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament

The deacon may preach at the following liturgies and occasions:

- Celebration of the Eucharist with approval of the Pastor
- Celebration of a sacrament when he is not the presiding minister of that sacrament
- Retreats, days of recollection, missions, and novenas.

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<sup>5</sup>NDPD, 85

- Sermons and talks, to be given at ecumenical gatherings or services

In those instances where a deacon may wish to be a minister of a liturgical celebration in a parish or institution other than where he is assigned within the Diocese of Bridgeport (e.g., Marriage, Baptism, Funeral), he must first obtain the proper delegation or permission from the pastor where he will minister. If the liturgical celebration is outside the Diocese Bridgeport, the deacon must contact the Office of Clergy so that the proper documentation can be prepared and presented to the host pastor.

### **Ministry of the Altar**

Every deacon is called to serve the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood by his proper participation at the celebration of Mass, his love and reverence for the Blessed Sacrament and his willingness to bring the Eucharist to those who are sick and unable to join the community of faith in Sunday worship. "After the priest, the deacon, in virtue of the sacred Ordination he has received, holds first place among those who minister in the celebration of the Eucharist. For the sacred Order of the Diaconate has been held in high honor in the Church even from the early times of the Apostles."<sup>6</sup>

By virtue of his ordination, a deacon may preside at a number of liturgical services including: baptizing infants, witnessing marriages, conducting wakes, presiding at funeral services outside of Mass, Communion Services, Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, and assisting at the celebration of Mass. Each deacon must also cultivate a profound love and reverence for the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood. Such a Eucharistic spirituality is essential in the ministries described above.

### **Unity of Diaconal Service**

The Church has always taught that the threefold ministry that marks the life and work of the diaconate forms a single whole whose parts can never be compromised or lost.

Therefore, diaconal ministries distinguished above are not to be separated; the Deacon is ordained for them all, and no one should be ordained who is not prepared to undertake each in some way . . . the deacon may also have greater abilities in one aspect of ministry; therefore, his service may be marked by one of them more than the others. Fundamentally, however, there is an intrinsic unity in a deacon's ministry.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>*Third Edition of the Roman Missal*, Chapter III, #94

<sup>7</sup>NDPD, 39

## **C. The Spirituality of Deacons**

### **Spirituality in the Life of a Deacon**

A deacon cultivates his spiritual life through private and communal prayer, attendance at daily Mass whenever possible, frequent reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and regular meetings with a spiritual director.

### **Spiritual Expectations**

#### **Daily Mass**

Depending on his schedule, a deacon is strongly encouraged to participate in the daily reception of the Eucharist, which is the summit and source of his growth in holiness. Frequent reception of the Eucharist allows Christ to nourish the deacon as he serves the people of God.

#### **Liturgy of the Hours**

Each deacon is obliged to pray Morning and Evening Prayer. The Office of Readings, Daytime Prayer and Night Prayer, while not obligatory, should be incorporated into a deacon's schedule when possible. The Liturgy of the Hours may be prayed privately or in community with others.

#### **Personal Prayer**

To attain an interior spiritual maturity requires an intense sacramental and prayer life. In addition to the daily recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours, personal prayer is to be part of a deacon's daily experience and may include lectio divina, the rosary, and reading of private devotions.

#### **Spiritual Direction**

All deacons must be in frequent contact with a spiritual director who can be a guide on the journey to grow closer to the Lord. Each deacon will submit the name of their spiritual director to the Office for Clergy where the information will be kept on file.

#### **Regular Confessor**

All deacons are encouraged to have a confessor to whom they confess on a regular basis.

### **III. THE DIACONATE WITHIN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH**

#### **A. The Deacon and His Bishop**

The deacon exercises his ministry within a specific pastoral context—the communion and mission of the diocesan Church. Ordained by his bishop, the deacon stands in a direct relationship with his diocesan bishop, in communion with whom and under whose authority he exercises his ministry. In making his promise of respect and obedience to his bishop the deacon takes as his model Christ, who became the servant of his Father. The bishop also enters into a relationship with the deacon since the deacon is his collaborator in the service of God’s people.<sup>8</sup>

By virtue of his ordination, a deacon is canonically incardinated into the Diocese of Bridgeport, and should consider him available to serve where the needs of the Diocese exist, as discerned by the bishop..

It is the bishop who assigns a deacon to a particular diocesan ministry. The criteria for each assignment include the pastoral needs of the diocese and local communities, the personal qualifications and abilities of the deacon and the needs of his family and work responsibilities.

The bishop is also responsible for supervising the ministerial life of deacons. He should, therefore, encourage and support them in their work, involve them in the committees and councils that assist him in the pastoral care of the diocese, promote their spiritual lives by providing spiritual counselors and continuing education programs for them.

#### **B. The Deacon and His Pastor**

Deacons exercise their distinct ministry in communion not only with the bishop, but also with priests. The priesthood and the diaconate are neither identical nor competitive but complementary ministries. “The diaconate is not an abridged form of the priesthood but a distinct and full order in its own right.”<sup>9</sup> Both priest and deacon should understand, then, that the diaconate is not to be thought of or exercised on the model of the priesthood. “Deacons and priests, as ordained ministers, should develop a genuine respect for each other, witnessing to the communion and mission they share with one another and with the bishop in mutual service to the people.”<sup>10</sup> Priesthood and diaconate are thus two distinct ministries for the good of the Church, and they must be exercised in communion with one another.

Deacons are to make every effort to assist and support their pastors. Deacons must always collaborate with their pastors, who are both the spiritual and administrative leader of the parish.

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<sup>8</sup>NDPD, 41

<sup>9</sup>NDPD, 50

<sup>10</sup>NDPD, 52

The priorities of family, employment, and ministry should be consistently reiterated and reinforced. A Deacon Ministerial Agreement, which is drawn up between the deacon and his pastor will help to define these priorities properly.

### **C. The Deacon and the Laity**

By virtue of their ordination, deacons become members of the clergy, with the rights and responsibilities that follow from that position. They are a unique instance of the clergy; since most of them are married, have secular careers, and do not engage in the Church's ministry as their sole activity. This combination of an ordained ministry with marriage and secular occupation can be a great strength to their ministry and great opportunity for the Church as a whole. Deacons are uniquely qualified to represent the presence of the Church to the world and the needs and challenges of the world to the Church.<sup>11</sup>



Although most deacons will give only part of their time to formal parish or diocesan diaconal ministries, they should not neglect the opportunities they have to exercise a public ministry in the world or in the marketplace. They do not cease to be deacons when they pursue their secular occupations, and there is much that they can do in the secular sphere precisely as deacons. The diaconate is a ministry through which the needs of the world are brought to the Church, and the gifts the Church has to offer are brought to the world. This mediating role can be made visible in powerful ways by the manner in which the deacon handles his secular career and his civic and public responsibilities. In turn, deacons should be able to bring to the Church the appreciation of the meaning and value of the Gospel that derives from their regular and deep involvement in the world, bearing as they do both the questions the world has to pose and the unique insights secular activity can provide.

### **D. The Deacon and the Diaconal Community**

It is part of Holy Orders that a man is, by this sacrament, brought into the “ordo” or body of ordained ministers. A communal element is thus essential to ordination and to the exercise of ordained ministry. The mutual support and fraternity of deacons are not just sociologically or psychologically useful things; they are integral parts of the meaning of their vocation.

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<sup>11</sup>NDPD, 56

Deacons are encouraged to cultivate a sense of community among themselves and their families. As a community, deacons should make every reasonable effort to attend diocesan functions, diaconal retreats, and funerals of their fellow deacons, wives, and family members.

#### **IV. ASSIGNMENT/REASSIGNMENT/RETIREMENT**

##### **A. Assignment to Ministry**

###### **General Norms**

The Diocesan Bishop makes all diaconal assignments for ministry in the diocese of Bridgeport. Ordinarily, the bishop will seek some input from the Council of Deans, the Vicar General, the Coordinator of Diaconate Formation and the pastor of each respective deacon and deacon candidate. The deacon is to accept willingly and in a Christian and professional manner whatever parish ministry the bishop assigns him.

The bishop may choose to give a deacon more than one assignment. However, no deacon will be assigned to multiple assignments without the opportunity to provide input to the Vicar General regarding the feasibility of fulfilling all that will be expected of him.

All assignments become official with a letter of appointment from the bishop.

###### **Term of Assignment**

All diaconal assignments, whether they are for newly ordained deacons or a change in assignment for presently ordained deacons, will be for a term of five (5) years. Terms can be renewed without limit. The duration of an assignment can also be extended or shortened at the sole discretion of the Diocesan Bishop

At the end of each term, an in-person meeting will take place among the pastor, deacon and respective Dean before an additional five-year term is granted.

###### **Ministerial Expectations**

The deacon is expected to provide a minimum of 10 to 12 hours per week of parish and/or public ministry—depending on the deacon’s family and career situation—and should be documented in his ministerial agreement. These hours do not include homily preparation time. Additionally, whenever possible, he should assist at a minimum of two parish Masses per weekend.

The deacon is granted the faculty to preach upon ordination and should be allowed to preach at a minimum of two weekend Masses per month. If the situation warrants it, the deacon should be encouraged to preach more often. As an example, deacons should have the opportunity to preach at weekday Masses. The deacon should be scheduled in the rotation for the pre-baptismal classes and the baptisms of the parish.

The deacon's hours of participation in parish ministry will involve more hours at such times as Christmas, Holy Week, Easter and special parish celebrations such as Confirmation.

In order to assist the deacon in his assignment and to grow in his ministry, the pastor:

- Will release his deacon from any parish responsibilities so that he can participate in an annual spiritual retreat and continuing education opportunities.
- Will support a deacon's time for ministries beyond the parish to include prison and hospital/nursing home ministry, hospice, Cursillo, Engaged Encounter, etc.
- When possible, should provide or assist in the purchase of vestments required to carry out the liturgical role of the deacon.
- Should provide access to an area in which the work of instruction, counseling, study and preparation can be performed by the deacon.
- Will provide a monthly stipend to help the deacon defray the costs incurred in the exercise of his ministry. The amount of this monthly stipend will be determined by the bishop on an annual basis.
- Will allow a minimum of four weekends off per year as personal vacation time. Other needs for time off can be negotiated with the pastor.

### **Wife & Family Participation**

Wives and children of deacons are called upon to sacrifice quality time with their husband and father for the good of Christ and the Church. Children of deacons should not be treated any differently from other children. The wives of deacons should not be expected to become any more involved in church activities than they wish. At the same time, the deacon must also remember that he is ordained to serve and should not take excessive vacation or undue time off. Family members as well as deacons themselves must keep in mind that they are all "public" figures in the parish.

### **Procedure for the Assignment of Newly Ordained Deacons**

Ordinarily, after a candidate for diaconate is called to ordination, he will learn of his parish assignment directly from the bishop or his delegate, either in a meeting with his wife or by letter. As part of the process of assigning the new deacon, the deacon and his wife also will meet with the Coordinator of Diaconate Formation.

Newly ordained deacons should schedule a meeting with their newly assigned pastor as soon as possible after receiving their assignment letter to discuss ministry opportunities in the parish. Upon ordination, the deacon is granted all the rights stated in the *Code of Canon Law* and carries out all the duties assigned to him by his pastor.

The pastor will assign the deacon ministries in the parish according to its needs. However, the deacon should be active in the life of the parish and perceive other ways in which he may bring his own gifts to parish life or public ministry, after consultation with the pastor.

All newly ordained deacons and their wives will meet annually with their respective Dean for each of the first two years after ordination.

### **Appointment of Deacon Mentor**

All newly ordained deacons are assigned a deacon mentor by the Bishop. The role of the mentor will be one of assistance and guidance for the newly ordained as they enter into pastoral ministry as an ordained minister of the Church.

## **B. Reassignment of a Deacon**

### **Reassignment When Initiated by the Bishop**

Because deacons are ordained for ministry for the entire diocese, periodic transfers will occur. When considering the pastoral needs of the diocese's parishes, institutions and ministries, the bishop may transfer deacons in accord with those needs. Transfers also may be initiated by the pastor or the deacon himself at any time for good cause.

When the bishop, through the Vicar General or Dean, asks a deacon to transfer, the Vicar General or Dean will alert the current and new pastors of the change, and the deacon himself will interview with the new pastor.

### **Reassignment When Initiated by the Deacon**

In order to initiate a transfer, a deacon must first consult with his wife and children about the change. He should then meet with the local Dean, who will either propose a plan to remedy any difficulties that may be prompting the request for transfer or expedite the transfer. The deacon should inform his pastor of his plans and submit a formal request for transfer in a letter to the bishop. When transfers are made, among the factors to be considered are the needs of the Church, the location of the assignment, the skills and talents of the deacon, his family's needs and his availability.

### **Reassignment When Initiated by the Deacon's Pastor**

If a pastor desires the transfer of a deacon, he will follow the same procedure as outlined in the section immediately above. After meeting with the local Dean, followed by the deacon himself, the pastor will submit a formal request for the transfer of the deacon in a letter to the bishop.

### **Resolution of Ministerial Disagreements**

If a serious conflict of any kind arises between the deacon and his pastor, the deacon must request a face-to-face discussion with his pastor. If the conflict is not resolved, the deacon must then contact his respective Dean to discuss the matter. The Dean will then contact the pastor and attempt to resolve the issue. A meeting with the deacon, his pastor and the dean will follow. If necessary, the Vicar General will be consulted.

If the source of conflict cannot be resolved, then a transfer may be initiated either by the deacon or by the pastor, following the procedures outlined above.

Evidence of any wrongdoing by a priest, deacon or pastor should be reported immediately to the Vicar General.

### **C. Other Ministerial Assignments**

#### **Leave of Absence**

For a serious cause, whether it is personal, spiritual or familial, a deacon may ask for a leave of absence from ministry for a determined period of time. Such a request must be discussed with the deacon's pastor before any petition is submitted to the bishop. If the deacon chooses to request a leave of absence, his petition must be made in writing to the bishop, who will ordinarily meet with the deacon and his wife to discuss the request. If granted, such a leave will be governed by the condition(s) that will be stated in a letter to be sent to the deacon by the bishop.

Ordinarily, when a deacon takes a leave of absence from ministry, he will return to his former assignment upon cessation of the leave. In special circumstances, the bishop or deacon may request that the deacon be given a new assignment upon his return.

#### **Sabbatical**

A one-time, three-month sabbatical period may be taken during or after the calendar year of the deacon's 15th anniversary of diaconate ordination prior to retirement. Exceptions to this norm must be approved by the Diocesan Bishop.

The following conditions are to be observed for the three-month sabbatical leave:

1. A written request must be made to the Diocesan Bishop one year in advance of the intended sabbatical period. The request should include the dates and location of the desired sabbatical, as well as information on the sponsoring institution, the program of study and goals of the sabbatical period.
2. Upon receiving permission from the Diocesan Bishop, the deacon must notify his pastor or supervisor. A pastor must notify the proper Dean, who will work with the pastor to find coverage for the parish.
3. During the sabbatical period, the parish or institution to which the deacon is assigned will pay his full stipend; in addition, it will provide an educational allowance (\$200/month) to assist with room, board and expenses during the sabbatical leave.
4. It is assumed that deacons who are granted a sabbatical leave will resume the pastoral position they had prior to the beginning of the leave, unless another arrangement has been made with the Diocesan Bishop.
5. At the conclusion of the sabbatical leave, the deacon should provide a written evaluation and the results of the sabbatical to the Vicar for Clergy so that his personnel file may be updated.

## **Service Outside of the Diocese**

A formal request for transfer to a ministry outside the diocese must be made to the Bishop with a copy sent to his respective Dean and the Vicar General. The letter must include the reasons for his proposed departure from the diocese, a description of the ministry that is being sought and an indication of the duration of the proposed ministry. If the move is employment-related, the letter must include the reasons for the move, such as a promotion or change in employer (*refer to Appendix D, pp. 43-44*).

If the bishop approves the deacon's request to seek ministry outside of the diocese, the deacon must then ask permission of the diocesan bishop in his new diocese. Since faculties are not automatically transferred from one diocese to another, the deacon must receive the permission of the bishop of the new diocese before exercising faculties there.

Any deacon seeking a ministerial assignment outside of the Diocese of Bridgeport will be regarded as being on a temporary leave, for five years before any excardination and incardination process can begin.

If a deacon has retired from active employment and he and his family are planning to relocate to a new diocese, he must write a letter to the bishop as outlined above.

## **Incardination Process**

A deacon who is in good standing in another diocese and seeks incardination into the Diocese of Bridgeport must submit a formal request for incardination to the Diocesan Bishop with a copy to the Vicar General. The specifics for the request must be stated in the letter. If the move is employment-related, the letter must include the reasons for the move. The arriving deacon must also ask permission of his current bishop to leave active ministry in his home diocese.

Before his petition for incardination can be processed, the deacon's former diocese will be asked to provide a statement of suitability for ministry for the deacon. All safe environment requirements must also be met in full before the deacon's petition can be acted upon.

Once approved for entry into the diocese, the arriving deacon will be granted an assignment(s) on a temporary basis for five years before the excardination and incardination process can begin. (*refer to Appendix D, pp. 45, 46, 47*).

## **Political Office**

"A deacon may not present his name for election to any public office or in any general election or accept a nomination or an appointment to public office."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>NDPD, 91

“A deacon may not actively and publicly participate in another’s political campaign.”<sup>13</sup>

## **D. Other Ministerial Considerations**

### **Deacon Ministerial Agreement**

Every five years or when a new pastor is assigned to the parish, the deacon and pastor should draw up a “Deacon Ministerial Agreement.” This provides the pastor and deacon the opportunity to review and agree upon the deacon’s ministerial responsibilities. (Cf. Appendix B).

An annual review should be held between the pastor and the deacon. The meeting should be summarized in writing by the pastor, a copy given to the deacon, a copy filed at the parish, and a copy sent to the Coordinator of Diaconate Continuing Formation.

For non-parish assignments appointed by the diocesan bishop (hospital chaplain, prison chaplain, high school chaplain, etc.), an annual review should be held between the Vicar General and the deacon. The meeting should be summarized in writing by the Vicar General, a copy given to the deacon, and a copy sent to the Coordinator of Diaconate Continuing Formation. The Vicar General can delegate this responsibility to the Vicar for Clergy.

### **Proper Address**

The appropriate written title for permanent deacons is “Deacon John Doe”. Deacons should be addressed as “Deacon.”

### **Clerical Identification**

When a deacon’s clerical identification card has expired, he must request a new wallet card from the Office of Clergy Personnel.

### **Proper Dress for Ministerial Work**

Deacons who possess the faculties of the Diocese of Bridgeport are permitted to wear clerical attire in the following ministerial situations: prison ministry, hospital ministry, nursing home visitations, wake services, interments, and in civil gatherings or ecumenical celebrations where the deacon is an official representative of the Roman Catholic Church. Clerical attire is to be a blue clerical shirt with Roman collar, black pants and black shoes.

Deacons serving as a Master of Ceremonies for the bishop will wear a cassock and surplice with Roman collar, black pants and black shoes.

Deacons that have received the Cross of St. Stephen should no longer wear the cross when conducting public ministry. Instead, deacons are encouraged to wear a symbol chosen by the diocesan bishop.

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

## **Diocesan Email Address**

Upon ordination, each deacon will be assigned a diocesan email address ending in *.diobpt.org*. This email address must be used exclusively to transmit and receive all official electronic diocesan correspondence. It is expected that each deacon regularly consult his email account to remain fully informed of diocesan-related matters.

## **Use of the Dalmatic**

The proper vestment for a deacon at Mass is an alb (with an amice if required), cincture, stole worn in the diaconal manner, and dalmatic. The stole and dalmatic should be of the corresponding liturgical color.

With respect to its habitual use, the dalmatic is to the Deacon what the chasuble is to the Priest. Therefore, in most cases the deacon may use the dalmatic only when the priest would use the chasuble. An exception to this rule is when a deacon accompanies a bishop or priest who wears a cope in a solemn celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours or for Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament.

There are no ritual situations in which a deacon would use the dalmatic on his own; it is only used when carrying out his functions accompanying a bishop or priest. Therefore, just as a priest would not use the chasuble for a Communion service, the deacon would not use a dalmatic. The same may be said of other celebrations of sacraments and sacramentals, such as funeral services outside of Mass.

The proper vestment for celebrations such as baptisms, weddings, funerals and the like outside of Mass is an alb and stole of the appropriate liturgical color.

## **E. Retirement**

### **Normal Retirement**

All permanent deacons are required to submit a letter of resignation from their ministerial assignments to the bishop upon reaching their 75<sup>th</sup> birthday. Once a deacon retires, the obligatory monthly stipend will end. Pastors may elect to continue the stipend if the retired deacon continues to pursue a ministry schedule. A retired deacon in good standing will retain his diaconal faculties.

### **Early Retirement**

A deacon may submit a written request to the bishop to retire prior to age seventy-five, after consulting with his pastor and his respective Dean. Additionally, any deacon who has not attained the age of seventy-five but whose ability to serve in active ministry has been permanently impaired because of ill health, other disability or personal reasons, may retire with the consent of the bishop. In either case, the deacon shall submit his written request for retirement directly to the bishop.

## **Effect of Retirement**

Even though a deacon retires, he remains a deacon in the service of Christ and the Church. For this reason, he should continue to fulfill the spiritual obligations of his state in life. A retired deacon, and his wife, will always be welcome at all diaconate functions including the annual retreat. He remains a member of the Diaconal Community because he is an ordained cleric for life. He should also continue to be addressed as "Deacon".

Whether the deacon has taken early or normal retirement he shall retain the faculties granted to him. As such, he is encouraged to continue to baptize, preach, assist in the Burial Rites of the Church and other ministries, with the permission of the local pastor.

To witness a marriage, the retired deacon must be delegated for a specific marriage by the pastor of the parish where the marriage is to take place.

## **V. BENEFITS OFFERED TO DIOCESAN DEACONS**

### **Monthly Stipend**

Each deacon in active pastoral ministry will receive a monthly stipend from the place of his assignment. The amount of the monthly stipend will be determined by the bishop and communicated to the diaconal community and the pastors of the Diocese on an annual basis. The current stipend will be \$300 per month.

Monthly basic compensation is considered as reimbursement of un-itemized expenses, and must be reported on a W-2 form. Taxes may or may not be deducted, at the discretion of the deacon; social security should not be deducted. If a deacon does not wish to accept his monthly stipend, it should be either returned or donated to the parish.

### **Retreats**

A deacon is required to make an annual retreat, for a minimum period of one weekend. Based on actual cost, a deacon is entitled to a maximum reimbursement of \$500.00 each year from his place of assignment for retreat expenses, regardless of whether it is an individual retreat or a couples' retreat. The deacon must submit a written request for the reimbursement indicating the location, if he attended alone or with his wife, and the total cost. Receipt or cancelled check is required.

### **Stipends & Gifts**

Any free-will offering given to a deacon on the occasion of a ministerial service is to be retained by the deacon. However, any offerings intended for any other purpose (parish, charity, etc.) should be honored as such.

## **Christmas Bonus**

The Christmas bonus for a deacon should be equal to his basic monthly stipend. The pastor is free to give the deacon a higher amount. The amount of a Christmas bonus for a deacon employed in a full-time or part-time salaried position for a parish or diocese should be determined by his pastor/supervisor.

## **Life Insurance**

Each deacon is covered by a \$10,000 life insurance policy. The deacon will receive a beneficiary card from the diocese, on which he must designate his choice of beneficiary of this policy. The diocese pays the premium for this coverage.

## **Burial Plot**

All deacons and their wives are entitled to a free burial plot or niche in the cemeteries managed by the Catholic Cemeteries of the Diocese of Bridgeport. Interment fees are also waived for deacons and their wives. Costs for memorialization are the responsibility of the deacon's estate. If a deacon or his wife have already purchased a burial plot in one of the Diocesan Catholic Cemeteries, they can request a refund from the Cemetery Office.

## **Full-Time Employment by Diocese or Parish**

To avoid conflicts of interest, ordinarily a deacon will not be employed by the same parish where he is assigned for his diaconal ministry, except with the approval of the bishop.

A deacon who is a salaried employee of a parish or a diocesan agency (e.g., DRE, Parish Manager, instructor in diaconate formation) will have his income reported in the usual manner. If he is a full-time employee, he is entitled to a salary and health, dental, and pension benefits commensurate with the norms of that position. In addition, the deacon is also entitled to the basic monthly compensation from his place of assignment, since he is expected to continue his weekly ministry and liturgical service to his parish of assignment.

## **VI. LITURGICAL NORMS AND PROCEDURES**

### **The Celebration of Baptism**

Deacons are ordinary ministers of the Sacrament of Baptism and enjoy faculties to baptize. However, this faculty is exercised only with the consent of the pastor of the parish where the baptism takes place.

Care must be taken to see that the baptism is correctly noted in the baptismal register of the parish where the sacrament is performed..

## **The Celebration of Weddings**

A deacon who witnesses marriages within the diocese must currently have faculties from the diocese and must have the written delegation of the pastor of the parish within which the wedding will take place if the marriage is to take place outside of his home parish. Without this validation, the marriage will not only be illicit but invalid. Further, the couple to be married must present a marriage license issued by the appropriate civil authority, or a certification of marriage outside the Catholic Church.

Deacons from outside the diocese must comply with all diocesan safe environment requirements, and have a letter of good standing sent to the pastor of the church where the wedding will take place. A deacon presiding at marriages outside the diocese must call the Office of the Vicar General and obtain a letter of good standing that will be sent to the pastor where the wedding will take place.

## **Participation at Mass with a Priest Celebrant**

When a deacon is present at the celebration of the Eucharist, a deacon should exercise his ministry, wearing an alb, stole of the appropriate liturgical color and a dalmatic (if available).

More specifically, the deacon:

- Assists the priest and walks at his side;
- Proclaims the Gospel and may, at the direction of the priest celebrant, preach;
- Ordinarily leads the intentions of the Universal Prayer;
- Ministers at the altar, both as regards the chalice and the Roman Missal;
- Assists the priest celebrant in distributing Holy Communion;
- Purifies and arranges the sacred vessels;
- Carries out the duties of other ministers, if necessary, when none of them is present.

## **Participation at Mass with a Bishop**

The deacon is to bring his own alb, cincture and stole. The stole should be the type that is worn under the dalmatic. At most liturgies celebrated by a bishop, the deacon wears a dalmatic (if at the Cathedral, the dalmatic is provided).

The deacon's place in the entrance procession depends upon the particular liturgy, on how many deacons are assisting, and on whether or not the Book of the Gospels will be carried in procession:

- If there is only one deacon, and he is carrying the Book of the Gospels, he should be immediately behind the Cross and the candles.
- If there is only one deacon and he is not carrying the Book of the Gospels, he walks immediately in front of the Master of Ceremonies and before the bishop.

- If two deacons are assisting, the Deacon of the Word carries the Book of the Gospels as described above, and the Deacon of the Eucharist walks front of the Master of Ceremonies and before the bishop.

The deacon(s) sits immediately on each side of the bishop. If there is only one deacon, he sits immediately to the right of the bishop. During the Mass of Ordination, Confirmation, or other diocesan Masses, the bishop requires that at least two deacons assist.

### **Liturgy of the Word**

After the second reading, the thurifer is brought to the bishop. The deacon takes the incense boat from the thurifer and holds it for the bishop while the bishop places incense into the censer. The Deacon of the Word then moves directly in front of the bishop and stands before him for the blessing. Having bowed to the altar, he then takes up the Book of the Gospels. After proclaiming the Gospel, the deacon takes the open Book of the Gospels to the bishop for him to kiss. The deacon then places the book at a reserved place to display and retain the reverence and dignity of the Word proclaimed.

The deacon ordinarily leads the intentions of the Universal Prayer. However, a lay minister may also do so with the permission of the bishop's Master of Ceremony. The bishop leads the introduction and concluding prayer.

### **Liturgy of the Eucharist**

The deacon accompanies the bishop to the front of the sanctuary to receive the gifts. At the altar, the deacon hands the paten with the bread to the bishop, while standing to the right of the bishop pours wine and a little water into the chalice, praying quietly the appropriate prayer." After this, the deacon presents the chalice to the bishop.

If the bishop incenses the altar, the deacon does not accompany him around the altar.

The deacon receives the censer from the bishop, bows to him, and incenses him with two swings and bows again. In the same way, the deacon next incenses bishops, if present, and then concelebrants, deacons and the assembly.

During the Eucharistic Prayer, the deacon stands at the bishop's right and slightly behind him. The deacon, if capable, kneels from the epiclesis through the elevation of the chalice, just before the memorial acclamation. As the bishop (and concelebrants) prepare(s) to speak or sing the final doxology, the deacon should be ready to accept the chalice from the bishop and elevate it as the bishop elevates the paten, and until the assembly has responded "Amen."

The deacon gives the invitation to the sign of peace. The deacon assists in distributing the Body of Christ to the concelebrating bishops and priests. After the bishop receives the Body and Blood of Christ, he will give Holy Communion to the deacon.

If extraordinary ministers of Communion have come forward, the bishop will next give them the Body of Christ. The deacon of the Eucharist should follow the bishop and minister the Precious Blood to the extraordinary ministers. If present, the Deacon of the Word and any other deacons present in the sanctuary may assist with ministering the Precious Blood to the extraordinary ministers, as well as with handing each minister the Communion vessel from which they will minister the Body and Blood of the Lord to the assembly.

During Communion, the deacon generally ministers the Precious Blood.

If a solemn blessing is used, the deacon gives the invitation: "Bow down for the blessing." After the blessing, one of the deacons dismisses the people, using one of the approved formulas. The bishop and deacons kiss the altar before departing the sanctuary.

## **VII. ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR DEACONS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

### **A. Marriage Counseling**

Any permanent deacon whose marriage is undergoing serious stress should make this known to his spiritual director. If this problem cannot be resolved with the guidance of his director, the deacon's pastor and local dean should be informed of the situation. Arrangements should be made for immediate counseling.

If the situation persists, the Dean will consult with the Vicar General. It may be recommended that the deacon ask for a leave of absence. If counseling results in a favorable outcome, the deacon may request permission to return to ministry, in writing, to the bishop.

In the case of an unfavorable result leading to a legal separation or divorce, the deacon may be kept on a leave of absence depending on the particular circumstances. He may or may not be permitted to return to ministry to exercise his functions as a deacon.

The deacon must petition in writing to the bishop, copying the Vicar General, for his permission to return to ministry, which will be at the discretion of the bishop.

In cases of separation or divorce, it is of the utmost importance that the rights of all parties be respected and any appearance of impropriety and/or scandal to the diocese and the Church be avoided. In this regard the deacon is to submit to the Vicar General all legal documents that have been submitted to the civil courts. After careful review, the Vicar General will make recommendations to the bishop concerning action to be taken concerning the status of the deacon. Until these recommendations are made, the deacon, at the discretion of the bishop, will continue on a leave of absence. Once the recommendations have been made to the bishop, it will be solely his authority to determine the status of the deacon during the separation and divorce proceedings. Each case will be treated on an individual basis and the utmost confidentiality will be exercised in these matters.

## **B. Family Counseling**

The tremendous demands made on marriages today can often be heightened by the additional challenge of ministry. Should any member of the diaconal community need the services of a trained counselor, the deacon must contact the Vicar for Clergy or Vicar General for assistance. A directory of offices and counselors to contact is available through the Office of Catholic Charities.

## **C. Widowers and Widowed Wives**

All deacons should be attentive to the needs of deacon widowers and widowed wives of deacons. If any deacon becomes aware of a particular need of a deacon widower or a deacon's widow, he should make such need known to the Vicar General.

## **D. Assistance to Deacons in Need**

If a deacon becomes aware of a brother deacon in need, he should, as much as possible, offer support and encouragement. In addition, he should make the need known to the Vicar for Clergy. In all cases, those involved should be sensitive to and conscious of the privacy of the individuals.

## **E. Personal Health Care**

With all of the demands placed on a deacon's daily life and increased responsibilities, caring for the health of his family and himself must be a priority. All deacons are encouraged to have proper health care insurance coverage and participate in regular or at least an annual physical examination. Proper treatment and following medical advice will prevent health deterioration and will allow the deacon to care for the welfare of his family and himself. (Refer to Appendix E)

When unfortunate adverse medical situations occur, and after the proper medical care has been sought, should the deacon feel that he needs assistance or intervention such need should be made known to the Vicar for Clergy. The Vicar for Clergy or Vicar General will communicate this information to the bishop who will make a recommendation of any action to be taken. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times and in every instance.

## **F. Last Will and Testament**

Deacons should not write the last will and testament of any person and shall avoid the appearance of any undue influence on others who are making their last will and testament.

Without permission of the bishop, a deacon shall not act as guardian, administrator, executor, trustee or agent for anyone except a member of his immediate family.

## **VIII. CONTINUING EDUCATION AND FORMATION OF DEACONS**

Under the direction of the Coordinator of Diaconate Continuing Formation, and with the support of the Diocesan Leadership Institute, a comprehensive and holistic program for the ongoing training, theological formation, and ministerial and spiritual support of deacons will be created. This includes the development and implementation of a mandatory three year continuing education curriculum for all newly ordained deacons. In addition, all deacons are required to participate in on-going formation on an annual basis as specified by the Coordinator of Diaconate Continuing Formation.

As these programs are created, their requirements will be communicated in a timely manner with the deacons of the Diocese and the men in formation. It is the expectation of the bishop that all deacons cooperate fully with whatever is required for ongoing training and formation.

## **IX. SAFE ENVIRONMENT REQUIREMENTS**

### **A. Preamble**

In accord with the “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People,” the USCCB promulgated “Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with the Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons” as approved by the Apostolic See. The Charter addresses the Church’s commitment to deal appropriately and effectively with cases of sexual abuse of minors by priests, deacons, and other church personnel.

### **B. Requirements**

In the Diocese of Bridgeport, a Safe Environments Program has been in place since 2003 and it has made great strides in prevention, detection and early intervention efforts.

Clergy are held to higher standards of behavior than other church personnel and are required to comply with standards of behavior included and specified in the Diocesan Safe Environments Program; they are expected to avoid even the appearance of impropriety both inside and outside the scope of their ministry. This applies to all clergy and men in formation.

With that mandate, the bishop has issued a newly revised and updated set of guidelines and procedures that are consistent with the revisions to the USCCB Charter. The updated *Safe Environment Handbook* should be read and understood by every member of the clergy.

Every deacon in the Diocese of Bridgeport must comply with the requirements of this handbook or he will not be allowed to function in the Diocese.

## **X. MINISTERIAL MISCONDUCT**

### **A. Introduction**

The bishop of the Diocese of Bridgeport has put into place policy and norms for the assignment of clerics with an allegation of ministerial misconduct that applies to all clerics serving in the Diocese.

### **B. Overview of Policy**

These ministerial misconduct norms apply to all cases when a cleric is accused of (1) misconduct involving another adult or (2) misconduct in the exercise of his ministry. In such instances, the bishop will rely on these norms in considering action regarding the cleric's assignment, including removal or suspension of his assignment, as well as any reassignment of the cleric.

These norms are presented for both the protection of the community of the faithful and for the maintenance and protection of the integrity of the Sacrament of Holy Orders. A priest or deacon who is accused of ministerial misconduct is to be accorded the presumption of innocence during the investigation of the allegation and all appropriate actions are to be taken to protect his reputation. If the allegation is deemed not credible, every step possible is to be taken to restore his good name, should it have been harmed.

Any allegation of misconduct subject to these norms will result in an internal investigation to determine the relevant facts and information surrounding the allegation. Based on a complete review of this information, there will be a determination as to whether the allegation is credible. Once an allegation is deemed to be credible based on the facts and information available, the Bishop may choose to convene the Ministerial Advisory Board in order to assist him in assessing the plan of action to address the misconduct and the conditions regarding assignment of the cleric involved.

For more details as to how this policy is applied and the process to be followed, please refer to the latest release of the diocesan Policy.

## **XI. THE DEATH OF A DEACON**

### **A. Diaconal Funeral Arrangement Sheet**

Each deacon should complete a funeral arrangement sheet that is to be provided by the Chancellor's Office. See Appendix C – *Planning Sheet for a Deacon's Funeral*.

A deacon's funeral arrangement sheet will list his family requests, personal requests and his stated preferences relative to his burial arrangements. It also includes items such as preferred homilists, special concelebrants, assisting deacons and readings and music to be chosen.

Please note that the funeral arrangement sheet is not the deacon's last will and testament.

Each deacon is asked to complete his funeral arrangement sheet and submit it to the Chancellor's Office upon ordination. The sheet will remain in each deacon's file and may be updated as needed. Each deacon should keep a copy for his own records.

## **B. General Procedures**

### **Initial Notification of a Deacon's Death**

Upon the death of a deacon, his family is to contact the pastor of the parish where the deacon was assigned. The pastor will notify both the local dean and the Vicar General's Office. For a retired deacon, his family is to contact the pastor of the parish in which the deacon resided and that pastor will contact both the local Dean and the Vicar General's office.

### **Responsibilities of the Vicar General's Office**

- The Vicar General's Office will then coordinate the arrangements for the wake and funeral of the deceased deacon with his pastor and family. The family of the deceased deacon should not finalize any funeral arrangements until the family is contacted by the Vicar General's Office.
- The Vicar General's Office will first notify the Bishop's Office to try to accommodate the date of the funeral with the bishop's calendar. If the diocesan bishop is not able to celebrate the Funeral Mass, the Vicar General should preside.
- The Vicar General's Office will contact the pastor of the parish regarding the details of the Funeral Mass.
- The Vicar General's Office will notify the Public Information Office so the appropriate official diocesan obituary notice may be posted. This notice is separate from the notice that is placed by the family in other newspapers.
- The Vicar General's Office will notify the Office of Clergy Personnel of the funeral arrangements for a deacon so that the diaconal community may be notified.
- The Vicar General's Office will notify all the appropriate diocesan agencies of the funeral arrangements and complete the memorandum that is to be sent to all the parishes of the diocese. The Chancellor's Office will request a death certificate that is kept in the deacon's personnel file.

### **Responsibilities of the Pastor**

In addition to contacting the Vicar General's office, the pastor can appoint himself or another staff member to act as liaison between the family, parish and Liturgy office. This person will be responsible for the proper arrangements of all the liturgical events.

## C. General Considerations Regarding the Funeral Rites

### General Principles

- a. Rites to be Celebrated: Regarding the rituals that comprise the funeral services for a deceased deacon, the rites ordinarily celebrated are:
  - i. Gathering in the presence of the body at the funeral home/church, for the wake service.
  - ii. Transfer of the body (if applicable) from the funeral home to the church.
  - iii. Funeral Mass
  - iv. Rite of Committal
- b. Role of deacons: inclusion of the deacons in the various funeral rites is to be encouraged to express the ministry of deacons and the unity of those ordained to the order of deacon.
- c. Language Consideration: When planning the funeral rites, considerations should be given to any language needs manifested by the family and parish.
- d. Music: "Music is integral to the funeral rites." It should be selected "with great care." The music "should support, console, and uplift the participants and should help to create in them a spirit of hope in Christ's victory over death and in the Christian's share in that victory."<sup>14</sup>
- e. The Wake of a Deacon: A deceased deacon can be waked either in a funeral home selected by his family, or in a church. A deacon may request to have his wake occur in the church to which he was assigned. This would require the pastor's approval. However, there will be no Mass of Transferal.

The deacon should be waked in white vestments proper to his order (i.e. alb, stole and dalmatic).

All liturgical norms listed below for the wake service should be observed.

- When the family first gathers in the presence of the body at the funeral home, the Rite of Gathering in the presence of the body should be celebrated.
- Morning or Evening Prayer of the Dead (OCF, #385-395) may be celebrated as appropriate. The vigil service should be celebrated the night before the Funeral Mass. The local Dean presides at this ceremony.
- On the day of the Funeral Mass, the family and close friends gather at the funeral home in order to prepare to accompany the body of the deceased deacon to the church, The

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<sup>14</sup> OCF, #30, #31

Rite of Transfer of the Body to the Church should be prayed. If one is available a deacon or a priest should lead this rite. (Omit if wake occurs in church)

### **The Funeral of a Deacon**

The diocesan bishop is usually the principal celebrant of the Funeral Mass. If prevented from being present for any reason, the Vicar General will be the principal celebrant.

The Funeral Mass is ordinarily celebrated in the church to which the deacon was assigned. Deacons who were not assigned to a parish will have their funerals celebrated in their home parishes, unless the deacon or his family has made some other specific request.

The pastor of the parish and the dean will be included with the special concelebrants that have been designated by the deacon or his family.

The homilist, chosen by the deceased deacon, can be a priest, deacon, or bishop.

### **Final Commendation of a Deacon**

The bishop or, in his absence, the pastor will give the final commendation.

## **XII. DIACONAL COUNCIL**

### **Diaconal Council By-Laws**

#### **Article I: Name**

The name of this group shall be the Diaconal Council of the Diocese of Bridgeport, hereafter known as the "Council."

#### **Article II: Purpose and Function**

The Council serves as an advisory body to the Diocesan Bishop regarding the ongoing formation, ministry and life of deacons and diaconate candidates in the Diocese. It will represent the diverse population of deacons, their wives and families.

1. The Council provides the diocesan bishop with concerns, needs and suggestions that arise from the diaconal community. Its members can also present possible solutions and plans for implementation to address these needs and concerns.
2. The Council will recommend guidelines, policies, programs, or events designed to help the diaconate community flourish spiritually, intellectually, socially, and in service of God's People.
3. The Council will raise awareness of the vocation of the deacon in the life of the Church. The deacon by his ordination is asked to embody and manifest Jesus the Servant within the community of believers. Our diaconal service should "inspire, and enthuse the faithful, giving them courage and strength, that they, in turn, may serve their brothers and sisters in the imitation of Christ."<sup>15</sup>

#### **Article III: Membership**

The Council is a working group drawn from the diaconate community of the Diocese of Bridgeport. Any deacon incardinated and living in the Diocese of Bridgeport is eligible to serve on the Council.

##### Section I: Composition:

The Council is composed of nine elected members of the diaconate of the Diocese of Bridgeport. The diocesan bishop, Vicar General, Vicar for Clergy, Coordinator of Diaconate Vocations, Coordinator of Diaconate Formation, and Coordinator of Diaconate Continuing Formation serve as *ex officio* members of the Council.

##### Section II: Selection of Members

- A. One deacon from each of the nine deaneries of the Diocese of Bridgeport shall be nominated for consideration as a member of the Council. Only permanent deacons who are incardinated and have faculties within the Diocese of Bridgeport may be

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<sup>15</sup> Owen F. Cummings, *Deacons and the Church*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2004. P. 28.

elected to the Council as members.

- B. Deacons shall elect these members to the Council from within each respective deanery where they are assigned.

### Section III: Election of Members

- A. The Coordinator of Diaconate Continuing Formation will organize and conduct the election of members to the Council, and Council members will be available to assist in this process.
- B. Voting for elected members will be by written ballot through the mail.
- C. Two names from each deanery (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> highest vote gathers) will be presented to the bishop for possible appointment.

### Section IV: Participation on the Council

- A. All members of the Council may chair or serve on committees, speak at meetings, present motions and vote on the deliberations of the Council.
- B. At the discretion of the diocesan bishop, all other deacons of the diocese and their wives may attend the Council meetings and be recognized by the Chairman to address the Council, but they are not allowed to vote. Any deacon not on the council, or his wife, must contact the Chairman of the Council previous to any council meeting to ask if the bishop is permitting non-members of the Council to attend that meeting.

### Section V: Members Duties

1. Meet annually with each deacon in their deanery.
2. Represent the views of the deacons they represent at the Diaconate Council.
3. Work with the Dean on matters that pertain to the deanery and arrange to meet formally twice annually to discuss major initiatives and announcements. This includes regular attendance at joint meetings with deacons and priests.
4. Communicate decisions of the Diaconate Council to the deacons in their particular deanery.
5. Promote fraternity among deacons in their deanery. If there is a cost associated with any formal gathering of deacons within a deanery, the Dean must be notified prior to the meeting to receive his approval and potential financial support.
6. Provide support to the Coordinator of Diaconate Continuing Formation by identifying the ongoing formation, continuing education, and liturgical practicum needs of the deacons in their deanery.
7. Promote increased attendance among deacons at all diaconate functions and educational opportunities, including the Annual Convocation.
8. Support the need to increase regular e-mail communications between the Bishop, and others through the diocesan e-mail system. Assure all deacons have an active DOB email account, **know how to access, and understand it must be used exclusively for diocesan communications.**

9. Assist the Coordinator of Diaconate Continuing Formation to assure that each deacon has a spiritual director, attends an annual retreat, and has in place an up-to-date Ministerial Agreement with their pastor.
10. Supports the Dean in coordinating Morning or Evening Prayer of the Dead at wake service or the morning of the funeral for a deacon or wife.

## **Article IV: Structure**

### Section I: Terms of Membership

- A. An elected Council member serves for a term of three years and may be re-elected for one additional consecutive term.
- B. The term of membership shall commence in the month following elections.

### Section II: Duties of the Council:

- A. The duties of the Council exist to maintain its proper functioning according to the by-laws:
- B. To coordinate and implement the activities of the Council.
- C. To present to the diocesan bishop and the Council resolutions for consideration.
- D. To advise the diocesan bishop and Coordinators of the Diaconate as requested.
- E. To appoint or dissolve committees of the Council.
- F. To assist in coordinating gatherings of the Diaconate community on a Diocesan level.

### Section III: Meetings

- A. The Council shall meet at least four times a year.
- B. The diocesan bishop may call for a special meeting of the Council.
- C. All meetings of the Council will be conducted in accordance with the most recent revision of *Robert's Rules of Order*.
- D. The Council ordinarily meets in person. However, if circumstances warrant, the Council may also meet telephonically, as determined by the Chairman or the diocesan bishop.

### Section IV: Quorum

- A. The voting body shall be composed of all elected and appointed members of the Council.  
A quorum shall consist of greater than fifty percent of the voting body as described above.

### Section V: Removal from Membership

- A. An elected Council member who has been absent without excuse from three consecutive Council meetings may lose membership on the Council, pending a decision by the diocesan bishop. To complete the term of a member, another deacon from the cohort where the vacancy exists shall replace the Council member.

This appointment will be made by the Diocesan Bishop on the recommendation of the Chairman of the Council.

- B. All members of the Council serve at the discretion of the bishop.

#### Section VI: Vacancy

- A. When the Diocesan See is vacated, the Diaconal Council shall cease to function as an official body.

### **Article V: Officers**

#### Section I: Designation:

- A. The Council shall elect the following officers from its own membership: Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Recording Secretary.

#### Section II: Term of Office:

- A. Officers shall be elected for a term of three years.

#### Section III: Vacancy in Office:

- A. A vacancy in the office of the Chairman shall be filled by the Vice Chairman who will complete the unexpired term.
- B. A vacancy in any other office shall be filled by election of the Council. The person elected will complete the unexpired term.

#### Section IV: Duties of Officers:

- A. The Chairman shall:
  - a. Preside at and conduct all meetings of the Council.
  - b. Determine the agenda for all meetings of the Council, presented to the bishop for prior approval.
  - c. Recommend to the Council the appointment of members to committees created by the Council.
  - d. In collaboration with the Coordinators of the Diaconate, ensure that information concerning Council decisions and deliberations is communicated to the diaconate community.
  - e. Perform such other duties as pertain to the office.
- B. The Vice Chairman shall:
  - a. Perform the duties of the Chairman in the absence or inability of the Chairman to serve.

- b. Succeed to the office of Chairman should the position become vacant on the termination, resignation or disability of the Chairman.
  - c. Perform such duties as may be assigned by the Chairman of the Council.
- C. The Recording Secretary shall:
- a. Be responsible for recording the minutes of all meetings of the Council.
  - b. Provide the Council members and the Diaconate office with copies of agendas and minutes of all meetings of the Council.
  - c. Publish the minutes of Council meetings for all members of the Diaconal Council.

#### Section V: Election of Council Officers

- A. The election of Council officers shall take place at the first meeting of the Council following the determination of the need for an election.
- B. Consent of nominees must be obtained before their names can be submitted for election.
- C. Voting for elected members may be by open or secret ballot, as determined by the Council.
- D. Nominees with the highest number of votes shall be considered elected.
- E. Those elected will take office immediately upon their election.

#### **Article VI: Committees**

##### Section I: General

- A. The Council may create committees as are necessary.
- B. Membership on committees shall not be restricted to Deacons.
- C. Committee chairman and members shall be selected by the Chairman of the Council.
- D. The Coordinators of the Diaconate are *ex-officio* members of all committees.

#### **Article VII: Revision to the By-Laws**

- A. The by-laws of the Council are promulgated by the diocesan bishop. They remain in effect until revoked by the bishop.
- B. Any revision of the by-laws can be proposed by the Council after proper deliberation and a 2/3 vote of the entire body.
- C. Upon presentation to the diocesan bishop, revisions may be approved.

## APPENDIX A – Glossary of Terms

*For the purposes of this Manual the following definitions will apply:*

1. **Active Ministry:** The regular and recurring exercise of rights and obligations pertaining to and deriving from a deacon's ordination.
2. **Assignment:** An official appointment made by the Bishop designating the community, parish, agency or other specialized ministry in which the Deacon shall be in active ministry.
3. **Bishop:** The Bishop of the Diocese of Bridgeport.
4. **Deacon:** A person who has been validly ordained to the diaconate as a distinct ministry.
5. **Diaconal Council:** A council of appointed and elected deacons to serve as an advisory and consultative body to the Bishop, the Vicar General, and the Coordinators of the Diaconate; to represent the deacons; and to serve their spiritual and corporal needs.
6. **Diocese:** The Diocese of Bridgeport, CT, USA.
7. **Coordinator of Diaconate Vocations:** The person who has been appointed by the bishop as the one who will promote vocational awareness of the Diaconate and support potential inquirers.
8. **Coordinator of Diaconate Formation:** The person who has been appointed by the bishop devoted to supervise all aspects of the formation program for those men preparing for ordination to the diaconate.
9. **Coordinator of Diaconate Continuing Formation:** The person who has been appointed by the bishop to create, supervise, and evaluate an ongoing continuing education and formation program.
10. **Episcopal Master of Ceremonies:** Refers to the bishop's Master of Ceremony or another cleric designated to coordinate liturgical celebrations for the bishop
11. **Faculties:** A faculty is a permission by the local bishop enabling a deacon to act in a way that the deacon would not otherwise be empowered or authorized to act.
12. **Office:** The Office of Clergy Personnel
13. **Pastor:** The pastor of the parish where the deacon is or will be assigned.
14. **Retired Deacon:** A deacon who has requested and received permission from the local bishop to cease functioning in an assigned ministry. In other words, the bishop no longer assigns him to a community, parish, agency or other specialized ministry.
15. **Sabbatical:** An extended period of leave from ministry granted by the bishop for the purpose of a deacon seeking more advanced or intensive study, reflection, etc.
16. **Leave of Absence:** An approved time away from ministry for serious cause due to personal, spiritual or familial issues for a determined period of time and granted by the bishop.

**Abbreviations:**

- i. CCC: *Catechism of the Catholic Church.*
- ii. CIC: *Code of Canon Law.*
- iii. NDPD: *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States.*

**APPENDIX B – Diocese of Bridgeport Deacon Ministerial Agreement**

**Pastor/Administrator** \_\_\_\_\_ **& Deacon** \_\_\_\_\_

*Important care must be given to the priorities in the life of the Deacon: Family, employment and ministry should be the proper sequence of priorities in the life of the Permanent Deacon, so it is not only the responsibility of the Permanent Deacon, but also of the diaconal family as a whole and the clergy, that these priorities are well observed and respected for the successful ministry of the Permanent Deacon.*

The parish of \_\_\_\_\_ in the Diocese of Bridgeport, represented by the Pastor or Administrator whose signature appears below, enters into a ministerial agreement with Deacon \_\_\_\_\_ who has been assigned to the parish by the Diocesan Bishop.

This Ministerial Agreement covers the ministerial services that Deacon will provide to the parish, in keeping with the policies of this manual.

This Ministerial Agreement covers the following five year period:  
\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

Ministerial responsibilities shall be defined as: (please select all that apply and specify frequency as needed)

- Active Participation in Clergy + Pastoral Staff Meetings
- Assisting at Mass
- Baptism Preparation for Parents
- Celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism
- Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage
- Celebration of Wake Services and/or Funeral Services
- Communion Services when needed
- Coordinate Parish Ministries Societies
- Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction
- Funeral Social Service Projects in the Parish and community at large
- Hospital / Nursing Home and Home visits to the sick
- Occasional Parish Office Duty
- Participating in diocesan and public ministry works of charity
- Preaching
- RCIA Ministry
- Sacrament of Marriage and Wedding Ceremony Preparation
- Youth Ministry
- Other (Please describe)

If there were significant travel in the ministry of the deacon to the parish, the deacon should be reimbursed for any expenses incurred for this reason, as well

as other expenses for the preparation or distribution of materials.

When completing this agreement, care should be taken that the wife is present and participates in the conversation. A brief summary should be added to this document when necessary.

This agreement is subject to be reviewed yearly by the pastor and the deacon. A copy of this agreement must be filed with the Office for Clergy Personnel.

**Summary Notes Section:**

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\_\_\_\_\_  
**Pastor / Administrator Name *(Please Print)*:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Deacon Name *(Please Print)*:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**APPENDIX C – Funeral Arrangements for a Deacon**

**PLANNING SHEET FOR A DEACON'S FUNERAL**

*Please complete this form in its entirety and seal it in an envelope with your name and the notation "Funeral Planning Information" written on the front. The envelope will remain sealed until the Vicar General's Office is advised of your passing. The Planning sheet should be updated every five years or whenever substantive changes occur.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**I.** Persons who will oversee your funeral arrangements. *(Please list in order of preference with contact information.)*

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

**II.** Three Deacons who will assist at the funeral when a Bishop is present. *(Please list in order of preference.)*

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

**III.** Concelebrants for the funeral. *(There are usually 4, possibly 10 concelebrants. Please list in order of preference.)*

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. \_\_\_\_\_

**IV.** Homilist for the funeral. *(Please list in order of preference.)*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

**V.** Priest/Deacon for the Rite of Committal at the Cemetery.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

**VI.** PLANNING THE WAKE SERVICE

First Reading \_\_\_\_\_

Gospel \_\_\_\_\_

Homilist: a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

*Readings and Psalm are to be chosen from the Order of Christian Funerals*

**VII.** PLANNING THE FUNERAL MASS

1. Music:

a. Entrance Hymn \_\_\_\_\_

b. Offertory Hymn \_\_\_\_\_

c. Communion Hymn \_\_\_\_\_

d. Recessional Hymn \_\_\_\_\_

2. Readings and Psalm *(From the Order of Christian Funerals)*

a. First Reading \_\_\_\_\_

b. Resp. Psalm \_\_\_\_\_

c. Second Reading \_\_\_\_\_

d. Gospel \_\_\_\_\_

**VIII.** LANGUAGE

First Request \_\_\_\_\_

Bilingual \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX D#1 - Sample letter from a deacon to the new (Arch)bishop<sup>16</sup> of the (Arch)diocese to which he is moving**

(Date)

(Deacon's home address)  
(City, State, Zip code)

Your Excellency:

I am a deacon of the Diocese of Bridgeport in good standing. By reason of employment (or for reasons of health and on the recommendation of my doctor), I shall be relocating into your (Arch)diocese after the beginning of (month).

Following my arrival in the (Arch)diocese of \_\_\_\_\_, I shall call your office to request an appointment to call on Your Excellency or your designated representative. I have requested of my (Arch)bishop that a letter of introduction be sent to Your Excellency.

Sincerely yours,

(Deacon's name typed)

Most Reverend  
(Arch)bishop of \_\_\_\_\_  
Address  
City, State, Zip code

cc: Director of deacons

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<sup>16</sup> Bishops and Archbishops are addressed, "Your Excellency"; Cardinals are addressed, "Your Eminence."

**APPENDIX D#2 - Sample Letter from a deacon to the Bishop informing him of an impending move from the diocese**

(Date)

(Deacon's home address)  
(City, State, Zip code)

Your Excellency:

By reason of transfer of employment (or reason of condition of health and recommendation of change in climate by my doctor), it is my intention to leave the Diocese of Bridgeport and resettle in the (Arch)diocese of \_\_\_\_\_, effective \_\_\_\_\_.

It is requested that a letter be sent to the (Arch)bishop of \_\_\_(name)\_\_\_ providing information of this move with appropriate letters of recommendation and evaluation.

Sincerely yours,

(Deacon's name typed)

Bishop Frank Caggiano  
Bishop of Bridgeport  
238 Jewett Avenue  
Bridgeport, CT 06606

cc: Vicar General  
Director of the Diaconate

**APPENDIX D#3 - Sample letter from a deacon to the Bishop stating his intention to seek Incardination elsewhere**

(Date)

(Deacon's home address)  
(City, State, Zip code)

Your Excellency:

I have been a resident in the (Arch)diocese of \_\_\_name\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_years. It appears that I shall be living here indefinitely. During this time I have been given faculties to minister in the (Arch)diocese of \_\_\_(name)\_\_\_\_\_.

After prayerful reflection, it is my intention, God willing, to seek incardination in the (Arch)diocese of \_\_\_(name)\_\_\_\_\_ and excardination from the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Sincerely yours,

(Deacon's name typed)

Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano  
Bishop of Bridgeport  
238 Jewett Avenue  
Bridgeport, CT 06606

cc: Vicar General  
Director of the Diaconate

**APPENDIX D#4 - Sample letter from a deacon to the receiving (Arch)bishop requesting Incardination**

(Date)

(Home address of deacon)  
(City, State, Zip code)

Your Excellency:

Having served the (Arch)diocese of \_\_\_(name)\_\_\_for \_\_\_\_\_ years with favorable evaluations of my ministry, because of pastoral needs of the (Arch)diocese, my own interest and pastoral formation, I desire to continue to provide pastoral ministry.

I have therefore requested excardination from my diocese of incardination, Diocese of Bridgeport, Connecticut, and the His Excellency has indicated his willingness to grant this. I now hereby request incardination in the (Arch)diocese of \_\_\_(name)\_\_\_ and declare that I wish to be dedicated to the service of the (Arch)diocese of \_\_\_(name)\_\_\_ in accord with the norm of law.

Sincerely yours,

(Deacon's name typed)

Most Reverend  
(Arch)bishop of \_\_\_\_\_  
Address  
City, State, Zip code

cc: Director of deacons

**APPENDIX D#5 - Sample letter from a deacon requesting Excardination**

(Date)

(Deacon's home address)  
(City, State, Zip code)

Your Excellency:

Because of the pastoral needs of the (Arch)diocese of \_\_\_(name)\_\_\_ and because of my own interest and pastoral formation, I desire to continue to provide pastoral ministry in the (Arch)diocese of \_\_\_(name)\_\_\_.

My relocation to the (Arch)diocese of \_\_\_(name)\_\_\_ was occasioned by reason of (employment, health, etc). What appeared to have been a temporary arrangement I have now been assured by my employers will be on a more stable basis. The prospect of long-term residence is now assured and the (Arch)bishop of \_\_\_(name)\_\_\_ has expressed a willingness to incardinate me.

In light of the above, I am therefore requesting excardination from the Diocese of Bridgeport in order that I might incardinate in the (Arch)diocese of \_\_\_(name)\_\_\_.

Sincerely yours,

(Deacon's name typed)

Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano  
Bishop of Bridgeport  
238 Jewett Avenue  
Bridgeport, CT 06606

cc: Vicar General  
Director of deacons

## **APPENDIX E – Financial Assistance Procedures**

### **Procedures for a deacon or a widow of a deacon to follow when there exists a need for financial assistance from the diaconal community.**

1. The Deacons' Fund ("The Fund") is established for the benefit of deacons or a widow of a deacon, suffering from some financial hardship.
2. The distribution of "The Fund" will be based on need and availability of funds.
3. A request must be submitted either in writing or via email to the Coordinator of Diaconate Continuing Formation specifying the reason for financial need of the deacon or the widow and the amount requested.
4. The distribution of funds must be approved by the Bishop, the Vicar for Clergy, and the Coordinator of Diaconate Continuing Formation.
5. Currently, the amount allocated to a deacon, or a widow who requests financial assistance shall not exceed 10% of the total funds available. At the discretion of the bishop, a higher amount may be approved.
6. Once a year, the bishop will send a letter to all deacons and benefactors seeking their ongoing support for "The Fund."
7. A "Thank You" note acknowledging receipt of a donation will be immediately sent to the donor from the Office of the Diaconate.
8. A yearly report will be sent to all deacons detailing the current balance in "The Fund" and summarizing transactions *over* the past year.

## APPENDIX F – Diaconate Office Structure

- I. Coordinator of Diaconate Vocations
  - a. The principal responsibility of the Coordinator of Diaconate Vocations, who will devote approximately twenty hours per month to this role, is to promote vocational awareness of the Diaconate and recruit potential inquirers.
  - b. His other duties will also be to:
    - i. Supervise a small team of deacons, candidates and laypersons to meet regularly to assist recruitment efforts.
    - ii. Attend Parish Men's Ministry meetings, Knights of Columbus meetings, Men's Retreats, etc., in order to promote the permanent diaconate.
    - iii. Recommend an ongoing diaconate vocation budget to raise awareness of the diaconate and attract good candidates, utilizing the Fairfield County Catholic, social media and all other reasonable strategies.
    - iv. Collaborate with the Deans and pastors to promote the diaconate within parishes.
    - v. Serve as an ex officio member of the Diaconal Council.
    - vi. Occasionally assist at Parish Masses on a planned basis and briefly speak about the diaconate.
- II. Coordinator of Diaconate Formation
  - a. The principal responsibility of this position, to which about twenty hours per week will be devoted, is to supervise every aspect of the formation program for those men preparing for ordination to the diaconate. His specific duties will be to:
    - i. Maintain a productive working relationship with Saint Joseph Seminary and research the establishment of a satellite campus within the Diocese of Bridgeport.
    - ii. Oversee the Admissions Committee, Evaluations Committee, Mentor Couples Coordinator. In this regard, the coordinator will also:
      - 1. Reevaluate and manage the mentoring program for the men in formation.
      - 2. Manage the wives' program for the spouses of men in formation.
      - 3. Establish a Formation Program Spiritual Director Coordinator.

- iii. In collaboration with the Diaconal Task Force, reengineer the formation weekends to achieve the following:
      - 1. Greater pastoral and spiritual formation.
      - 2. Improved homiletics training.
      - 3. Closer collaboration with the priest facilitators and faculty who teach during the formation weekends.
    - iv. Maintain an office within the chancery to be a "visible diaconate presence" for the chancery staff.
    - v. Serve as an ex officio member of the Diaconal Council.
- III. Coordinator of Diaconate Continuing Formation
  - a. The principal responsibility of this position, to which twenty hours per month will be dedicated, is to create, supervise and evaluate an ongoing diaconate continuing education and formation program.
  - b. More specifically, he will be expected to:
    - i. Create and implement a mandatory three-year continuing education plan for all newly ordained deacons, which will include the establishment of a supporting budget.
    - ii. Ensure that the "Deacon Ministerial Agreement" between each pastor and deacon is up to date.
    - iii. Collaborate formally with the members of the Diaconal Council, who represent the nine Deaneries, in order to identify and provide educational support for all permanent deacons.
    - iv. Investigate online courses in partnership with the Leadership Institute.
    - v. Plan and lead Annual Convocations.
    - vi. Hold liturgical training sessions to ensure consistency and excellence when serving at the altar.
    - vii. Work with the Center for Ignatian Spirituality at Fairfield University to assist deacons in finding a qualified spiritual director.
    - viii. Serve as an ex officio member of the Diaconal Council.