



The

# Deacons' Manual

*Policies*

*for the*

*Ministry and Life*

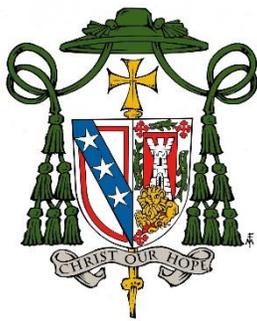
*of the*

*Permanent Diaconate*

*of Richmond*

*August 10, 2018*

**DIOCESE OF RICHMOND**



Office of the Bishop

## Diocese of Richmond

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Dear Deacons,

It is a pleasure to present the Deacons' Manual for the Diocese of Richmond. It reflects both the principles articulated in Church law, as well as the lived experience of this local Church.

A few years ago, under my predecessor, it was determined that our Permanent Deacon Policy Manual needed to be updated to include recent developments and current practice. A task force of Deacons from the Deacon Council and the Vicariate Deacons, as well as the Vicar for Clergy, worked on this project and made recommendations to me. This new document is the fruit of their work, and it is promulgated for use in the Diocese of Richmond effective August 10, 2018, the Feast of Saint Lawrence, Deacon and Martyr.

A Deacon is a visible sign of the Church's call to service. He is a person who is ordained for works of charity, the celebration of sacred rites, and the fulfillment of pastoral duties to which he is assigned. In your service to the Church, it is my sincere hope that this Policy Manual will be an effective tool to help you carry out your ministry on behalf of the people of God in your individual parishes.

As this policy takes effect, I join my prayers with yours in thanking God for the gift of the Diaconate and ask God's abundant grace to continually sustain you as you generously serve the parish, and Diocese.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Barry C. Knestout".

Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout  
Bishop of Richmond

10 August 2018  
The Feast of Saint Lawrence, Deacon and Martyr

# Permanent Deacon Manual

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. The Universal Call to Holiness and Service

The call to holiness and to service is the call of all baptized Christians. Holiness embraces all of one's life and hinges on three loves: the love of God, the love of neighbor and the love of self. The three cannot be separated. Eucharist and prayer are basic to the individual's response to the call to holiness. Self-discovery and self-knowledge in the context of spiritual direction and theological reflection light the way in one's search for God. The witness of others in the community of faith also gives individuals the strength and courage to face oneself and the challenges of life. In living out this challenge of holiness day by day, we discover how intimately God is involved in our lives.

In this discovery of God, one discerns a call to service, a vocation. This vocation, whatever it may be, is a call from the Spirit of the whole person. To understand this vocation requires the intuition of the person and the voice of the Church speaking in its members and in its leaders. Within the larger communion of the Church, and for the sake of its essential vitality, holiness, and constant growth, there exists by divine institution the Sacred Ministry. Defined in the *Code of Canon Law* and other Church documents are the three levels of ordained ministry: bishops, priests and Deacons.

"By Divine Institution some...are constituted Sacred Ministers through the sacrament of orders by means of the indelible character with which they are marked: accordingly, they are consecrated and deputed to shepherd the People of God, each in accord with his own grade of orders by fulfilling in the Person of Christ the Head, the functions of teaching, sanctifying, and governing. The Orders are the Episcopacy, the Presbyterate and the Diaconate." (CCL #1008, 1009)

"Thus, the Divinely Instituted ecclesiastical ministry is exercised in different degrees by those who, even from ancient times, have been called bishops, priests, and Deacons" (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, LG. #28)

## B. Function of the Permanent Deacon

By his vocation to orders, the Deacon is called to diaconal service which effects a new relationship to the Holy Spirit and is publicly acknowledged as one called by the Spirit for the good of the entire community of believers. The Deacon is united in a fraternity of service and sacramental ministry with all those ordained and publicly commits himself to the responsibility of communicating God's word and announcing His Kingdom. The Deacon is a person who by ordination is publicly committed to the service of Christ in all that he does. He is a visible sign of the Church's call to "diakonia" - service. "He is a person with a special mission requiring special relationships within the community of God and people," (*Permanent Deacons in the United States: Guidelines for Their Formation and Ministry*,

#14, 1971). He is both servant and sacrament. It must be noted however that the purpose of the Deacon is not to be seen as supplying ministry where there is a shortage of priests. Rather, it is an authentic ministry in itself.

The permanent diaconate broadens the concept of ministry and makes it possible for more to share in it in varying ways. Pope Paul VI in his discussion of the permanent diaconate in the early Church mentions the performance of works of charity, the celebration of sacred rites, and the fulfillment of pastoral duties (*Ad Pascendum*). *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* also speaks of these three areas of diaconal service. “For strengthened by sacramental grace, in communion with the bishop and his group of priests, they (Deacons) serve the People of God in the ministry of the liturgy, of the Word and of charity” (#29). *The Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons* states that, “The ministry of the Deacon is characterized by the exercise of three *munera* proper to the ordained ministry, according to the specific perspective of *diakonia*.” In his address to Deacons on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Diaconate Centre on June 4, 2016, Pope Francis provided the following exhortation to permanent Deacons:

Deacons manifest the Commandment of Jesus in a particular way: imitating God in the service of others; imitating God who is love and even goes so far as to serve us. The manner of God’s acting—that is, His acting with patience, goodness, compassion, and willingness to make us better people—must also characterize all ministers: Bishops as successors of the Apostles, priests—their co-workers—and Deacons who “serve tables” in practice (Acts 6:2). It is especially Deacons who are the face of the Church in the daily life of a community, which lives and journeys in the midst of the people and in which the greatest is not the one who commands, but the one who serves (cf. Lk 22:26).

The Deacon is therefore ordained specifically for the ministry of proclamation and instruction (word), the ministry of sanctification in the sacramental life of the Church (liturgy) and the ministry of charity and assistance. This last gift represents a specific charism of the Deacon.

What the Deacon is ordained to do then falls under these three categories of ministry. The following are ways that Deacons can serve in each area of ministry. These lists are by no means exhaustive. Countless new and different areas in which ministry will be needed will appear constantly and these areas of need should be seen as fertile soil for diaconal ministry.

1. In the Ministry of Charity through person to person contact the Deacon:
  - a. Ministers to the aged
  - b. Ministers to the sick
  - c. Ministers to prisoners
  - d. Ministers to the poor
  - e. Ministers to the grieving
  - f. Provides spiritual support to those suffering from family conflict
  - g. Participates in programs dealing with community problems such as alcoholism, drug addiction, poverty, etc.

- h. Ministers to young adults
- i. Ministers to youth
- j. Participates in parish and diocesan gatherings
- k. Ministers to the international community

2. In the Ministry of the Word the Deacon:

- a. Proclaims Scripture and preaches in liturgical gatherings
- b. Teaches in religious education programs in parish and diocesan settings
- c. Teaches at informal gatherings and meetings
- d. Participates in sacramental preparation

3. In the Ministry of Liturgy the Deacon:

- a. Assists the bishop and priest at Mass
- b. Acts as ordinary minister of communion
- c. Proclaims the Gospel
- d. Preaches the Homily when delegated by the pastor
- e. Celebrates Baptisms
- f. Witnesses the Rite of Marriage
- g. Conducts wake services, funerals outside of Mass and burial services
- h. Administers blessings and sacramentals
- i. May preside at Prayer Services, Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, Stations of the Cross, Liturgy of the Hours, etc. (The Deacon cannot preside at the Celebration of the Eucharist, the Sacraments of Confirmation, Anointing of the Sick, Penance or Holy Orders.)

The *General Instruction for The Roman Missal* states, “if the Deacon is present at any celebration of Mass, he should exercise his office,” (GIRM, #116). However, the exercise of his diaconal office during liturgy at the parish of assignment will be determined in the written ministry covenant. In the case of a Deacon visiting another parish, exercising the role of Deacon during liturgy will be at the discretion and invitation of the pastor or the priest presiding at liturgy.

The special situations of Sunday celebrations and daily celebrations in the absence of a priest need to be addressed. Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest should follow the conditions and norms set forth in the ritual text for *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*. Should an emergency or other situation arise making it impossible for the priest to celebrate a regularly scheduled weekday Mass, Liturgy of the Word and Communion may be celebrated by the Deacon. In order to affirm and maintain the importance and integrity of the Eucharistic celebration however, such services should be kept to a minimum and none should be held outside of those times already set for a regularly scheduled Mass.

### **C. The Permanent Deacon and His Family**

Deacons as well as their wives and families are encouraged to appreciate the mutual relationship between the sacrament of marriage and the sacrament of orders. A stable marriage and loving family life are positive attributes contributing to this ministry. The

married Deacon or Deacon candidate keeps sight of the practical order of priorities: the sacrament of matrimony preceded the sacrament of orders and must maintain that same practical priority in the Deacon's life.

“Even though it is clearly understood from the outset that the wife is not to be ordained, nevertheless her marriage and family are truly involved. The Deacon and his wife will need to make a realistic assessment of how her own career, ministry, family and personal preference will be affected and respected. They have to be aware that the nurturing and deepening of their mutual sacrificial love will be the most important way that she will be involved in her husband's public ministry in the Church.” (*Permanent Deacons in The United States: Guidelines for Their Formation and Ministry*, #110, 1984).

Part of the challenge of this ministry is the need to "mold the personality of the sacred ministers in such a way that they become a bridge and not an obstacle for others in their meeting with Jesus Christ, the redeemer of man" (*Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons*). Naturally, such a distinctive call to conversion and confirmation is a specific spiritual charism that will affect in profound ways the relationships that exist between the Deacon candidate or Deacon and his immediate and extended families, as well as his friends, partners in the workplace and fellow Christians in a parish or diocesan setting. These relationships must be taken into account and assistance must be given to candidates and family members to help them find appropriate ways to understand and incorporate these new realities.

#### **D. Forms of Address**

The permanent Deacons in the Diocese of Richmond shall be addressed as Deacon N. \_\_\_\_\_ in the performance of their duties. For all official purposes, in correspondence, listings, ministries and titles he shall be addressed as Reverend Mister N.\_\_\_\_\_. These titles shall be standard throughout the Diocese. In a parish setting, bulletin or church web site listing, the form of address should however, be consistent with how the pastor is addressed or listed. For example, if the priest at a parish is listed as Father N.\_\_\_\_\_ then the Deacon should be listed as Deacon N.\_\_\_\_\_.

#### **E. Dress and Attire**

The *General Instruction on the Roman Missal* states that the dalmatic is the “vestment proper to the Deacon” and is worn “over the alb and the stole” but that the dalmatic may be omitted (GIRM, #338). In addition, the document *Instruction Redemptionis Sacramentum* states “it is praiseworthy to refrain from exercising” this option (i.e. omitting the dalmatic). Therefore, local parish situations and customs will determine the use of the dalmatic.

In our Diocese, the Bishop has directed that clerical garb shall be worn in a parish liturgical setting and also outside the parish when conducting funeral services, ministering in hospitals and Catholic schools, officiating at weddings, engaging in detention and prison ministry and working in other official Church functions. From time

to time the presence of Deacons will be requested for special occasions (i.e., honorary events) as well as significant liturgical celebrations within the Diocese (i.e., Chrism Mass, Confirmation Mass). When there is a procession associated with liturgical events, Deacons will be expected to wear clerical garb and vest with alb and stole. Clerical attire will be appropriate for other special occasions. Deacons serving as Deacon of the Mass, Deacon of the Word or Deacon of the Eucharist should vest in dalmatics appropriate for the occasion.

## **II. DEACON'S CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **A. Introduction**

Since they all work toward one end, the building up of the Body of Christ, Deacons are to be united among themselves, the bishop and priests, by the bond of brotherhood and of prayer, and they are to strive for cooperation among themselves in accord with the prescriptions of particular law (c.275, §1).

The Deacon is to obey the diocesan Bishop (or his vicars when they command in his name) concerning universal and diocesan disciplines. As a participant in the ministry of the Bishop, the Deacon obeys for the good ordering of the Church (c. 273).

Evangelical gospel poverty is part of the witness of the Deacon's lifestyle and all activity and behavior that is unfitting a man of the Church is forbidden because of the diminishment of his witness to the gospel (c. 282 and 285).

Permanent Deacons in the Diocese of Richmond are to conduct themselves in a manner that upholds not only the above Canons but also Catholic values. This Code for Deacon Conduct provides a set of standards for doing so; however, it does not present an exhaustive list of expectations, standards or requirements. Rather, it accompanies the Universal Law of the Church, national and diocesan policies and the norms of civil law. Deacons must be aware of and committed to these norms that govern pastoral conduct.

Deacons, together with their spouses, through their actions and conduct, can inspire and motivate people but they can also scandalize and undermine people's faith. Responsibility for adherence to the Code for Deacon Conduct rests with each Deacon and those who disregard the Code will be subject to remedial action up to and possibly including dismissal from ministry. Corrective action may take various forms, from a verbal reproach to removal from ministry, depending upon the specific nature and circumstances of the offense and the extent of the harm done.

### **B. Spiritual Life**

Because of the consecration to God in the sacrament of orders, the Deacon must pursue a life of holiness. Each Deacon will follow his own form of spirituality, keeping in mind the expectations of the Church for Deacons. The following are minimum expectations:

1. First of all, he will carry out his pastoral ministry as approved in his ministry covenant.
2. The Deacon must make an annual retreat.
3. He shall pray the Liturgy of the Hours, especially Morning and Evening Prayer as set forth by the USCCB.
4. The Deacon is encouraged to participate in daily Mass whenever possible.
5. He is to engage in personal prayer, frequent Reconciliation and other devotions to foster holiness.

6. The Deacon must keep up-to-date in theology and pastoral matters, must attend conferences, the annual Deacon convocation and quarterly vicariate meetings when they are held, and must fulfill the requirements for continuing education described in this document, Section VI.

### **C. Personal Standards**

1. Deacons and their spouses will model a life consistent with the teachings of the Gospel, promoting through their own behavior the way to love God and neighbor as self. Deacons will also exhibit a deep commitment to the Church and loyalty to its traditions and teachings in the way that they interact in the lives and circumstances of the people they serve. In all personal and professional relationships, Deacons will reflect by their words, actions and attitudes, fidelity to the promises they made at their ordination. The collaborative relationship with the bishop, presbyterate and other Deacons further exemplifies the ecclesial reality of the sacred orders they have received.
2. Deacons are responsible for maintaining their own spiritual, physical, mental and emotional health through proper nutrition, adequate sleep and exercise, taking time away from the parish for family vacations, guarding against addictive or abusive behaviors (i.e. abuse of alcohol, prescription and/or illicit drugs) and nurturing the relationship with his spouse (if married) and appropriate friendships outside of marriage and pastoral relationships.
3. The unmarried Deacon at ordination assumes the obligation of celibacy; the married Deacon affirms faithfulness to his marriage vows. They are called to witness faithfully to this promise in all their relationships and be aware of warning signs of potential problems and approaching boundary violations, all the while recognizing the unique dynamics at work in pastoral ministry.

### **D. Pastoral Standards**

1. Deacons will honor the equal dignity of all people, avoiding all forms of discrimination and respecting the dignity of each person by providing service without regard to economic status, age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or physical or mental abilities.
2. Deacons will reach out to all people in a spirit of humility, reverence and respect, especially those who feel estranged from the Church. Deacons will take care to be approachable and available, subject to their primary responsibility to spouse and family, to help those who seek assistance and to be sensitive to the good of the community as they respond to the diverse forms of spirituality and theology within it.
3. Deacons in concert with their pastors should not restrict the rights of the Christian faithful beyond what laws of the Church provide.

## **E. Specific Provisions**

### **1. Pastoral Counseling and Spiritual Direction**

- a) From time to time, the Deacon may provide pastoral counseling and spiritual direction. In doing so, he must not step beyond his competence in those situations and is to refer the client to other professionals when appropriate. Deacons are to consider carefully the possible consequences before entering into a counseling relationship with someone with whom they have a pre-existing relationship (i.e. an employee, professional colleague, friend or family member).
- b) The Deacon is responsible for establishing and maintaining clear, appropriate boundaries in all counseling and counseling-related relationships. Physical contact of any kind (touching, hugging, holding) between the counselor and the one being counseled can easily be misconstrued. Sexual intimacies and inappropriate sexual comments must never occur.
- c) Counseling and other appointments are to be conducted at appropriate times and in appropriate settings, not in private living quarters or in places that would tend to cause questions or confusion about the nature of the relationship. In offices, the client's ease of exiting should be assured. If possible, doors should have a glass pane for visibility from the outside.
- d) Counseling sessions are not to be audio or video taped. Deacons providing pastoral counseling or spiritual direction are to maintain a log of the times and places of sessions with each person being counseled.

### **2. Confidentiality**

- a) Deacons are to hold in strict confidence information disclosed to them during the course of counseling, advising or spiritual direction except for compelling professional reasons or as required by law. Deacons are to discuss the nature of confidentiality and its limitations with each person in counseling.
- b) Consultation with the appropriate Church authority (the pastor or immediate supervisor) is required before disclosure of records at the request of a government agency or, if there is clear and imminent danger to someone, of information necessary to protect the parties affected and to prevent harm. Before disclosure, if feasible, Deacons are to inform the person being counseled about the disclosure and the potential consequences and they are to seek permission of the one who has disclosed private information before using it in a public way.
- c) Deacons should keep only minimal records of the content of sessions. Knowledge that arises from professional contact may be used in teaching, writing, homilies or other public presentations only when effective measures are taken to

safeguard absolutely both the individual's identity and the confidentiality of the disclosures.

- d) If, while counseling a minor (anyone under the age of 18) in a formal setting, the Deacon discovers that there is a serious threat to the welfare of the minor and that communication of confidential information to a parent or guardian is essential to the child's health and well-being, the Deacon is to attempt to secure written consent from the minor for the specific disclosure, and if consent is not given to disclose only the information necessary to protect the health and well-being of the minor.

### **3. Conduct with Youth**

- a) Every permanent Deacon functioning in the Diocese of Richmond shall attend and maintain current his training status in the "Protecting God's Children Program" (VIRTUS) mandated by the Diocese.
- b) Deacons must be aware of their own and others' vulnerability when working alone with youth and are to use a team approach in managing youth activities.
- c) Physical contact with youth can be misconstrued and is to occur only when it is (a) completely non-sexual, (b) otherwise appropriate, and (c) in public.
- d) Deacons must abstain from the use of alcohol when working with youth and from the possession and/or use of illicit drugs at all times. Deacons will not allow the consumption of alcohol by anyone under age 21.
- e) Deacons must not allow minors to whom they are not related to stay overnight in a Deacon's private accommodations nor are they to share private overnight accommodations with individual young people. This includes but is not limited to Church owned facilities, private residences including the Deacon's home, hotel rooms or other places where there is no other adult supervision present. This however, does not apply to personal family situations.

### **4. Sexual Conduct**

- a) Unmarried Deacons are committed to a celibate lifestyle; married Deacons to faithfulness to their spouses. They are to be an example of these lifestyles in all relationships at all times. Any conduct against the sixth commandment of the Decalogue is forbidden (c.1395).
- b) No Deacon is to exploit for sexual gain or intimacy the trust placed in him by the faith community or its members. Deacons must not initiate sexual behavior and must refuse it when another person invites it except with their spouses. Deacons must show prudent discretion before touching another person since physical touch may be misconstrued.

- c) Deacons are to avoid developing inappropriate intimate relationships with minors, other Church personnel or parishioners. Particular care should be taken in developing relationships with those who are most vulnerable: children, teenagers and those who are developmentally challenged.
- d) Allegations of sexual abuse involving minors must be taken seriously and reported immediately to the appropriate Church and proper civil authorities.
- e) Allegations of all sexual misconduct (sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or sexual harassment) involving adults must also be taken seriously and must be reported to the appropriate Church authority who may also report the allegation as required by law. The policies of the Diocese regarding sexual misconduct and sexual abuse are to be followed to protect the rights of all involved.
- f) Deacons should review and be familiar with the contents of child abuse regulations and reporting requirements of the Commonwealth of Virginia and are to follow those mandates.

## **5. Harassment**

- a) Deacons will establish and maintain ministerial relationships characterized by openness, honesty and integrity, avoiding any abuse of ministerial power and respecting the dignity of others who are called to participate in the mission of the Church. They will refrain from any statements that are false, degrading, defaming, invasive or harmful to another's reputation.
- b) Harassment can be a single severe incident or a persistent pattern of behavior the purpose or effect of which is to create a hostile, offensive or intimidating work environment. It encompasses a broad range of physical, written, or verbal behavior including but not limited to physical or mental abuse; racial insults or derogatory ethnic slurs; sexual advances, touching, comments or jokes; requests for sexual favors used as a condition for employment or to affect other personnel matters such as a promotion or compensation; and the display of offensive materials. Deacons will not engage in such harassment of staff, volunteers or parishioners and will not tolerate such harassment by other Church staff or volunteers.
- c) Allegations of harassment will be taken seriously and reported immediately to the appropriate Church authority such as the pastor, principal, catechetical administrator or the Vicar General. At the same time, merely calling others to fulfill the legitimate expectations of their positions is not, in and of itself, harassment. Diocesan policies are to be followed to protect the rights of all involved.

## **6. Records and Information**

- a) There are times when a Deacon has access to and may be responsible for creating, maintaining, storing, accessing, transferring and disposing of Church records. Confidentiality must be strictly observed in this process. Great care must be taken to preserve the anonymity of individuals. Information regarding adoption and legitimacy remains confidential regardless of age.
- b) Personnel authorized to access Church records are to be instructed in preserving their confidentiality. Parish records of contributions are also confidential. Information regarding custody and use of Church funds will be made available to the Parish Finance Council and in summary form, to the parish at least on a yearly basis. Diocesan financial policies are to be carefully observed.

## **7. Conflicts of Interest and Civic Involvement**

- a) Deacons are to avoid relationships or situations that could impair right judgment, create conflicts of interest or lead to exploiting a relationship for personal gain with employees, family members, students, friends or business relationships. Deacons are not to take advantage of anyone to whom they are providing services in order to further their personal, political or business interests. Clear roles and boundaries must be maintained and care must be taken so as not to become personally involved especially by becoming an advocate for one person against another. In these circumstances, the Deacon must absent himself from the matter and refer the parties to other competent persons for further assistance.
- b) The Deacon will receive permission from the diocesan bishop before seeking and assuming public office. Once ordained, a Deacon cannot volunteer to serve in the armed forces without the permission of the diocesan bishop (c.289). Permission is also needed to be a military chaplain.
- c) The Deacon cannot publish an article in a periodical that is accustomed to attack the Church or Catholic teaching without permission of the diocesan bishop. Likewise, because of the public nature of the Deacon, scheduled appearances in the media (TV, radio or newspaper) when of a religious nature, should have the permission of the diocesan bishop.

## **8. Reporting Misconduct**

- a) Deacons have the duty to report their own professional and ethical misconduct and the misconduct of others. They are to be aware of and clearly understand the ethical and professional standards of behavior that arise from our Catholic tradition and which have been developed and elucidated by the Catholic Diocese of Richmond and are to determine that their behaviors comply.
- b) Deacons strive to hold one another accountable to these ethical standards in accord with the approved accountability process for the Diocese. When there is

an indication of violations of the Code for Deacon Conduct by any Deacon, the Episcopal Vicar, the Vicar for Clergy and the appropriate Vicariate Deacon are to be notified immediately, as well as the proper civil authorities when the law requires. When an uncertainty exists about whether a situation or course of conduct violates this Code for Deacon Conduct or other religious, moral or ethical principles, Deacons are to consult with their vicariate Deacon.

- c) The obligation of all Church personnel to report misconduct is subject to the duty of confidentiality. However, any agreement or duty to maintain confidentiality is to yield to the need to report misconduct that threatens the safety, health or the psychological or physical well-being of any of the persons involved except as provided for in Section 2 above.

## **9. Administration**

- a) Whatever their role or office, Deacons will observe the personnel and financial policies of the Diocese of Richmond. They are to take special care to observe the moral, ethical, legal and fiscal standards and sound business practices that are the fundamentals of good stewardship. Deacons are responsible for the stewardship and the clear accounting of all Church resources entrusted to their care and will not use or borrow money or resources from pastoral or ministerial accounts for personal use. Deacons will exercise prudent judgment in the giving or accepting of gifts or benefits.
- b) Deacons serving in the role of Pastoral Coordinator, Administrator or a like position are required to make a full disclosure of all assets of the parish to the diocesan Bishop in the manner specified. Personnel and other administrative decisions made by Deacons are to meet the requirements of both canonical and civil law and are to reflect Catholic social teachings and this Code for Deacon Conduct.
- c) Upon the publication of this Code for Deacon Conduct or upon the acceptance of a ministerial role in the Diocese, each Deacon shall sign and return his acceptance of this Code to the Vicar for Clergy.

### **III. INCARDINATION and EXCARDINATION**

*“One of the effects of ordination to the diaconate is first incardination. Those who are ordained (permanent) Deacons, married or celibate, are incardinated in a Diocese the same as those who are ordained transitionally on the way to ordination as a presbyter. The incardination of (permanent) Deacons is subject to the same norms as the incardination of transitional Deacons. It is lost only by death, loss of the clerical state, or a process of excardination and incardination”* (USCCB, Secretariat for the Diaconate, Protocol for the Incardination/Excardination of Deacons).

#### **A. Incardination: Historical Background**

Incardination refers to a relationship or attachment of a priest or Deacon to a diocesan Church headed by the diocesan bishop. The idea of incardination has existed from the earliest days of the Church. Canon 6 of the Council of Chalcedon required all those who were ordained be subject to an ecclesiastical superior. The Council of Nicea affirmed the principle that an ordained cleric is always attached to a Diocese and from the time of the Council of Trent the idea of incardination has been understood to mean the bond to a diocesan Church for which a priest or Deacon is ordained.

Within Canon Law, the term incardination has come to refer to two ideas or concepts. The first is that a priest or Deacon is incardinated in a Diocese with his ordination; he is attached to the diocesan Church of ordination. However, it also is part of the process of transferring one's allegiance from one diocesan Church to another, and hence from one bishop to another. In order for a cleric already incardinated in one Diocese to be incardinated validly into another particular Diocese, he must obtain from his diocesan bishop a letter of excardination signed by the bishop; he must likewise obtain from the diocesan bishop of the particular Church into which he desires to be incardinated a letter of incardination signed by that bishop (c. 267, §1).

Canon Law prescribes that: "Every cleric must be incardinated into some particular Church," as such, excardination from one Diocese does not take effect until the priest or Deacon obtains incardination into another Diocese (c.265). Canon 269 sets forth this explicitly in stating that a diocesan bishop cannot allow the incardination of a cleric unless he is certain by means of a legitimate document that excardination has been granted. The incardination of Deacons is subject to the same norms as the incardination of transitional Deacons. It is lost only by death, loss of the clerical state, or a process of excardination and incardination.

#### **B. Incardination: The Process and Stages**

There are four distinct stages, each with its own particular objective, that form the process by which a Deacon incardinated in another Diocese may, with the approval of the Bishop of Richmond, and at his sole discretion, be incardinated into the Diocese of Richmond. For the purpose of reviewing incardination requests, the Vicar for Clergy consults with the Vicariate Deacons who act as a standing personnel committee for the

Bishop through which requests for incardination are considered. The committee **recommends**; the Bishop makes the final decision.

### 1. Stage One – Inquiry

- a) A Deacon must have on file a letter from his own proper ordinary giving him permission for ministry in the Diocese of Richmond. In addition, the candidate for incardination must supply:
  - 1) A personal letter, addressed to the Bishop or the Vicar for Clergy, for use by the Vicar for Clergy and concerned parties. This letter should clearly request incardination and explain the reasons for the request to serve outside one's own Diocese and a thorough and clear explanation of the request for pastoral work within this Diocese.
  - 2) A statement concerning his training, experience, and the type of ministry he prefers.
  - 3) An original letter from his bishop, addressed to the Bishop of the Diocese of Richmond, wherein permission is given the Deacon to seek incardination.
  - 4) A complete and accurate Diocesan Personal Record Form and a recent photo (passport quality) as well as a written record of the Deacon's academic, spiritual and pastoral formation, to include notation of academic degrees awarded or citations earned and an evaluation of the Deacon's ministry.
  - 5) Four original letters of recommendation, written by colleagues (one of whom is a pastor or ministerial supervisor with whom the Deacon has served or a fellow Deacon) with whom the Deacon has worked during the most recent three years, are to be sent to the Vicar for Clergy on his behalf.
  - 6) Participate in all background checks and fingerprinting as required for admission to ministry in the Diocese.
- b) The Vicar for Clergy, in consultation with the Vicariate Deacons, will review the information assembled, interview the candidate, and when possible visit the site of his ministry and confer with those with whom the Deacon has ministered.
- c) When all of the above information has been received and references checked, the recommendation of the Vicar for Clergy is to be forwarded to the Bishop for his decision.
- d) If the Bishop finds the applicant acceptable to begin the process of incardination, the applicant is invited to **STAGE TWO** of the process.
- e) If the applicant is found not acceptable for incardination, the Bishop or his delegate notifies the applicant as soon as possible, stating the reasons for his non-acceptance or noting that additional information is requested.

## 2. Stage Two: Pre-Acceptance

The permanent Deacon and his wife, if the Deacon is married, **must visit** the Diocese of Richmond. During this time the following interviews and evaluations will be required:

- a) **Particular Interviews**  
The Deacon and his wife have an interview with the Vicar for Clergy and/or at the request of the Vicar for Clergy one of the Vicariate Deacons, that focuses on the applicant, the Diocese, its needs and the diocesan policies governing acceptance and ministry.
- b) **General Interviews**  
The candidate must meet with individuals designated by the Vicar for Clergy to review his concept of spirituality of the permanent Deacon, the Church, pastoral ministry in the contemporary Church; theological awareness, Church law and liturgical practice, cultural and ethnic attitudes and adaptability, and marital and family responsibilities. They should also review the Deacon's knowledge of sexuality in the Church today, the issue of sexual abuse and the VIRTUS program.
- c) **Psychological Interview**  
A psychological interview and assessment with a professional designated by the Vicar for Clergy shall be made. The Diocese and candidate share this expense.
- d) **Physical Examination**  
A complete physical examination will be arranged with a physician designated by the Vicar for Clergy. The applicant bears this expense himself. Should an examination of sufficient thoroughness have been conducted within the past six months, a certified copy of the record must be presented, thus eliminating this step. A permanent Deacon found to have a potentially life-threatening medical condition at the time of the physical examination will not be incardinated into the Diocese.
- e) **Fingerprinting and Background Check**  
Per Diocesan Policy, all candidates and permanent Deacons of the Diocese, including those serving in or seeking incardination in the Diocese, whether incardinated or assigned to the Diocese, shall be fingerprinted and screened every four (4) years through the FBI Criminal Records and the Central Criminal Records Exchange of the Virginia State Police and through the Central Registry of Child Protective Services of the Virginia Department of Social Services. Specific policies relating to military Deacons, retired Deacons, visiting Deacons and Deacons from the Diocese of Richmond visiting other Dioceses are outlined in Section D below.

- f) **Summaries and Recommendations Prepared**  
Each of the aforementioned interviewers will prepare a summary of his/her sessions and present it to the Vicar for Clergy for his recommendation to the Bishop for a final decision. The Bishop will communicate this decision to the candidate.
- g) **Cooperation Essential**  
Refusal to cooperate in any of the above steps or refusal to make results known to the Bishop, the Vicar for Clergy, or the Vicariate Deacons is cause for immediate and final refusal to accept the candidate for service in the Diocese.
- h) **Candidates Share of the Cost**  
Although the Diocese reserves the rights of ownership of the psychological assessment and medical reports, the candidate will be expected to share the cost of the former with the Diocese. A final determination regarding the sharing of costs will be made in consultation with the Vicar for Clergy.
- i) **Decisions**

- 1) **Favorable Decision**

If the applicant is found acceptable, he can be accepted for ministry in the Diocese *ad experimentum* for five years. An initial assignment and starting date is to be negotiated with the Vicar for Clergy and the appropriate Vicariate Deacon and the Deacon's potential pastor. It is the Bishop who will appoint him to a particular parish ministry.

For applicants accepted *ad experimentum* a diaconate supervisory program is to be established. The role of a supervisor will be constituted to assist the new candidate in acclimating him to his new pastoral situation. Moreover, said supervisor is to be informed of any special difficulties that affect the ministry of the candidate and prudently share such issues with the pastor. The candidate must be fully informed of the specifics of the diaconate supervisory program and is expected to make contact with his supervisor within seven (7) days of his arrival for the *ad experimentum* stage in the Diocese. The supervisor shall complete an annual assessment of the candidate and provide the assessment to the Vicar for Clergy during each year of the *ad experimentum* period.

- 2) **Unfavorable Decision**

If the Bishop concurs with an unfavorable recommendation, he sends a letter to the candidate giving the reasons for his non-acceptance with copies to the Vicar for Clergy and the applicant's bishop. A copy is placed in the candidate's personnel file. The Bishop may decline to incardinate the applicant at any point in the process.

### 3. Stage Three - Pursuing Incardination

Once the applicant is accepted to this stage, a notice containing the Deacon's pastoral assignment is printed in the *Catholic Virginian* with a letter of notification sent to all appropriate diocesan officials.

Within one month of his acceptance to this stage, the candidate must commence the supervisory process with an assigned supervisor, schedule a meeting with the Vicar General, the Judicial Vicar and the Vicar for Clergy and other diocesan officials who can assist him in ministry.

Within the first three months, a ministry covenant must be completed and the candidate must have met with the other Deacons seeking incardination who are called EXTERNS.

The supervisor visits on-site with the candidate and the pastor (or pastoral administrator) in order to assist the Deacon in his transition, using the ministry covenant as a guide for discussion.

The following timetable is recommended: supervisor and candidate visit monthly for the first three months with bi-monthly visits thereafter.

An assessment is made of the progress of the candidate within six months by the supervisor and shared with the candidate and the pastor. A copy of the assessment is placed in the candidate's file. The supervisor also provides a written summary of the meeting wherein the evaluation results are reviewed with the candidate.

The pastor and staff and a sampling of lay people make an annual evaluation of the candidate. The results are shared with the candidate in a meeting with the supervisor and copies are placed in the candidate's file.

Upon completion of the above, the candidate will meet with the Vicar for Clergy for a review of his first year of ministry within the Diocese. The Vicar for Clergy consults with the vicariate Deacon and recommends his continuation or non-continuation in written form. The Bishop makes the final decision, which he communicates in writing to the Extern.

An Extern is expected to attend all incardination sessions and to participate in continuing formation sessions for Deacons as outlined in this document. Materials describing the special historical, cultural and social composition of this state and the Diocese are easily available. The candidate should avail himself of these so that he may be more conversant with the local Church. Some sessions of the intern process, which are more didactic in nature, may be of interest to a new Deacon in the Diocese; he is invited to participate in

those sessions. He should contact the appropriate Vicariate Deacon for further information.

#### **4. Stage Four-Evaluation and Acceptance**

- a) After five years of ministering in the Diocese, the appropriate Vicariate Deacon and the Vicar for Clergy will conduct a formal evaluation of the Extern. The recommendation of each will be forwarded to the Bishop. The Bishop shall make a decision in accord with the norms of Canon Law.
- b) If the Bishop agrees to the Deacon's incardination, he shall indicate this to the Deacon and ask him to request an official letter of excardination from his diocesan bishop. When this letter is received, the Bishop will then write a letter of incardination to the Deacon. Incardination is not completed until both documents have been executed and the bishops (*a quo* and *ad quem*) have been duly notified.

For the acceptance and incardination of foreign Deacons, the norms issued by the USCCB will also be observed.

### **C. Excardination**

The process of excardination begins with the request of a Deacon of the Diocese of Richmond to be released for service in another Diocese. All such requests will be submitted in writing to the Bishop, through the appropriate Vicariate Deacon. Once the Bishop has granted permission for this, the Deacon is to submit to the Vicar for Clergy, on an annual basis, a report of his ministry elsewhere.

If the Deacon has determined to request incardination in another Diocese, he should so notify the Bishop of the Diocese of Richmond and request permission to begin the process of incardination elsewhere. At the time of incardination, he should also request an official letter of excardination from the Bishop of Richmond. As noted above, Canon 265 requires that all clerics be incardinated in some particular Church.

### **D. Background Screening Policy for Military, Retired and Visiting Deacons**

#### **1. Military Deacons**

A military Deacon does not have to be screened by the Diocese if the Deacon provides the Diocese with a copy of his fingerprint cards and other screening performed by the military, to include screening results. Should the screening exceed the four-year requirement, the military Deacon will need to be screened by the Diocese. If the military Deacon does not or cannot provide the Diocese with the screening documents and results, he will need to be screened by the Diocese.

A military Deacon also needs a letter from his Diocese indicating that he is a “Deacon in good standing” in the military.

## **2. Retired Deacons**

A retired Deacon, verified to be disabled, will not be required to be screened if he is not active in the Diocese.

## **3. Visiting Deacons from other Dioceses**

A visiting Deacon needs to present a letter indicating that he is a “Deacon in good standing” and that he has been cleared through the background screening process in his respective Diocese. This letter is acceptable for 30 days. After 30 days, the Diocese will need a copy of his screening or he will have to be screened by the Diocese of Richmond.

## **4. Deacons from our Diocese who visit other Dioceses**

A Deacon of the Diocese of Richmond needs to carry a letter indicating that he is a “Deacon in good standing” and that he has been cleared through the diocesan screening process. Should a Deacon have a criminal record, and be relocating to another Diocese, it will be recommended that the other Diocese perform a background screening on that Deacon. The Diocese of Richmond will disseminate information according to Virginia State Law and the Virginia Code.

## **E. Faculties and Permissions**

Faculties are granted to Deacons under Canon Law by virtue of their ordination. They are granted to empower the Deacon for ministry and are intended for the spiritual benefit of the faithful and the common good of the Church. Permission to exercise these faculties is granted by the local bishop and usually with assignment to a specific parish or ministry. In most cases a Deacon who wishes to exercise faculties in a parish outside his parish of assignment must have permission or at least the implied consent of the pastor of the other parish. In some cases, such as marriage there must be specific delegation to exercise a faculty.

A Deacon who is excardinated from another Diocese and incardinated into the Diocese of Richmond is generally granted permission to exercise faculties upon incardination. Permission to exercise faculties may also be granted to a Deacon who is in the process of seeking incardination into the Diocese or to a Deacon who is residing temporarily within the Diocese.

The following are specific areas where faculties are granted under Canon Law to permanent Deacons:

## **1. Preaching**

Canon 764 grants permanent Deacons the faculty to preach anywhere. They may preach the homily at Mass and preach at other liturgical events.

## **2. Baptism**

Canon 861 grants Deacons the faculty to administer baptism solemnly to infants and children. The baptism of adults and children over the age of fourteen is deferred to the local bishop under Canon 863 which he in turn can delegate to the local priest.

## **3. Marriage**

Under Canon 1111 Deacons can be delegated the faculty to witness Christian marriages in the parish to which they are assigned. To witness marriages outside his assigned parish a Deacon must obtain specific delegation from the pastor of the parish where the marriage is to be held. In all instances the preparation required by the Diocese must be followed.

Marriages are to be recorded in the parish of the ceremony and pre-nuptial papers are to be kept there as well. In the case of dispensation from canonical form, the marriage is to be recorded and records kept at the parish at which the pre-nuptial preparation was conducted.

Canons 1124 and 1125 grant Deacons the faculty to grant permission for mixed marriages for reasons described within Canon Law.

Deacons who have the faculty to witness marriage, when everything has been prepared for the marriage and when marriage cannot be delayed without probable danger of grave harm until the dispensation can be obtained from the competent authority, are granted, under Canon 1080, the faculty to dispense from all the impediments to marriage which may be dispensed by the local bishop. In such cases the chancery must be notified within three days. Under Canon Law dispensation from canonical form is reserved to the bishop.

## **4. Funerals**

In regard to funerals and wake services the following faculties are reserved to all permanent Deacons.

- a) To conduct services such as rosary, scripture reading, appropriate sermon, etc. at wakes
- b) To accompany the body from the funeral home to the church
- c) To conduct the rite of final commendation when it does not immediately follow the funeral Mass
- d) To lead the prayers at the cemetery

## 5. Sacramentals

According to the New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law (c.1169) Deacons are given the following faculties concerning blessings and sacramentals:

- a) To give blessings at rites in which they preside such as Liturgy of the Hours, Baptisms, Marriages, Holy Communion and Viaticum outside of Mass, Benedictions and non-sacramental penance services
- b) To administer the blessings designated in *De benedictionibus*, and the Book of Blessings
- c) According to Canon 1168, Deacons, along with priests and bishops, are the ordinary ministers of sacramentals in accord with public law

In addition to these faculties as stated above Deacons as members of the clergy are also expected to pray the Liturgy of the Hours (divine office) as prescribed by the conference of bishops (c. 1174). The USCCB document, *Permanent Deacons in the United States: Guidelines For Their Formation and Ministry*, Canon 276 paragraph 2 and 3 states: “Although they are not bound by universal Church law to say the whole of this prayer every day, permanent Deacons should not hold themselves lightly excused from the obligation they have to recite morning and evening prayer.”

## **IV. ASSIGNMENTS**

### **A. Policy Concerning Assignments**

The permanent diaconate is a vocation to which the Deacon dedicates his whole person. Much of a Deacon's ministry will be defined by his conduct outside the normal agency of a parish or other diocesan institution. Consequently, Deacons are encouraged to view the workplace as an area of ministry. Deacons are reminded that they are ordained representatives of the Church. The Deacon is ordained for the Diocese and generally not for a particular parish, agency or institution.

Notwithstanding the foregoing and for specific canonical purposes, every Deacon of the Diocese shall be assigned by the Bishop to active ministry in a parish, an institution or agency in the Diocese. Specific canonical assignment allows the Deacon to exercise the faculties that he receives at ordination. Since he is ordained by the Bishop, the Deacon stands in a direct relationship with the Bishop, in communion with whom and under whose authority he exercises his ministry.

Even though the permanent Deacon should view his workplace as a place of ministry as stated above, he also commits to ministry at his assigned place of ministry. Realizing that permanent Deacons have other responsibilities involving family and work that vary and that some weeks require more time in ministry, the amount of time the permanent Deacon is involved in ministry will vary.

The principal criteria for diaconal assignments are the pastoral needs of the Diocese and of local communities and the personal qualifications and abilities of the Deacon, as they have been discerned during the course of his formation and any previous experiences of the Deacon. The assignment shall also take into account his family and occupational responsibilities.

### **B. Assignment and Change of Assignment**

Prior to ordination, the Vicar for Clergy in consultation with the Vicariate Deacons shall recommend diaconal assignments to the Bishop after consultation with the Deacon, the Deacon's spouse and the appropriate supervisor. Prior to such a recommendation, a written ministry covenant should be developed and signed by the Deacon, the Deacon's wife, if applicable, and the supervisor. Due consideration shall be given to job, home and family circumstances of the Deacon by the assigning authority in making Deacon assignments that require relocation.

The term of assignment, time and duration shall be established by the Bishop. A Deacon can request transfer from a canonical assignment. A Deacon who wishes a change of canonical assignment must apply to the Vicar for Clergy for a transfer. The appropriate Vicariate Deacon(s) and the Vicar for Clergy should assist him in identifying the reasons for such a request as well as possible placements in which the Deacon's talents may best be utilized. The appropriate Vicariate Deacon will meet with the current pastor or

supervisor and assist in a smooth transition. The Deacon will submit to the Vicar for Clergy a new written ministry covenant executed by the Deacon, his wife, and the proposed new supervisor. After the Vicar for Clergy's review, he may recommend or present without recommendation such request for transfer to the Bishop. Any change of appointment is effective only upon issuance of a letter of appointment from the Bishop.

The Bishop may transfer a Deacon from the parish, agency or institution of appointment at any time if, in his sole discretion, he deems such a transfer necessary for the good of the Church and/or the Deacon.

## **C. Categories of Assignment**

### **1. Parish Deacons**

Parish Deacons are assigned by the bishop through the office of the Vicar for Clergy to work in a parish. The parish Deacon's ministerial role, reporting relationships and working relationships are described within his ministry covenant which is approved by his pastor and the Vicar for Clergy. The parish Deacon is the most common of the five categories of assignment of the diaconate in the Richmond Diocese. Some parish Deacons may also work as pastoral staff members or pastoral leaders within the parish. They will have additional responsibilities beyond what is stipulated in the ministerial covenant and those responsibilities will be clarified in the position description.

### **2. Specialist Deacons**

Specialist Deacons are assigned by the Bishop through the office of the Vicar for Clergy and perform a specific function. The specialist Deacon's ministerial role, source of work direction, and working relationships are described in his ministry covenant. Specialist Deacons report to the Vicar for Clergy. They may work full time or part time and may also maintain affiliation with a parish and carry out ministerial functions at that parish.

### **3. Deacons Seeking Assignment**

These Deacons are currently not assigned as parish Deacons or specialist Deacons. They are invited to participate in Deacon community life activities, and the prayer life of the clergy. They may be given specific assignments from the office of the Vicar for Clergy. They will engage in a plan for obtaining assignment in a parish or in a specialty. This plan will be reviewed periodically with the Vicar for Clergy. Due to their lack of assignment these Deacons will be restricted in the exercise of their faculties. Upon written request approved by the Vicar for Clergy, these Deacons can be granted permission to exercise specific faculties.

#### **4. Retired Deacons**

Upon reaching the age of 75, the status of all Deacons will be that of retired Deacon. A retired Deacon will not submit a covenant and is exempt from all continuing education requirements. Although officially in retired status, retired Deacons remain Deacons for life. They are invited to participate in all Deacon community life activities and the prayer life of the clergy. A retired Deacon may also decide to continue in some aspects of his ministry. Faculties will remain in effect and if a Deacon would like to continue to minister in some capacity he need only seek an arrangement with a local pastor and the agreement of his wife to continue. The local pastor will advise the Bishop via the annual report which retired Deacons are assisting in his parish. Sacraments appropriate for a Deacon may be administered with the permission of the local pastor.

#### **5. Deacons on Leave**

These Deacons are placed on inactive status either by their own request or at the direction of the bishop, working through the office of the Vicar for Clergy. While inactive they forfeit all faculties but are expected to take part in the prayer life of the clergy. This inactivity will most often stem from family needs, health reasons or as result of major tragedy or bereavement in the life of the Deacon. With approval of the Bishop, these Deacons may return to active status at an appropriate time.

### **D. Written Ministry Covenant**

The pastor or supervisor, the Deacon and the Deacon's wife, if any, in consultation with the staff at the parish, institution or place of ministry should develop a written ministry covenant concerning the Deacon's ministry. This agreement will help eliminate unrealistic expectations, establish realistic goals and preserve proper communication between and among the Deacon, the Deacon's wife, if any, the pastor or supervisor, and the Bishop. This written ministry covenant will outline the Deacon's role in the assigned parish community or valid non-parish diocesan institution/ministry.

This covenant should include information about the Deacon's involvement in liturgies, responsibilities in chosen areas of ministry, and other areas that may be pertinent to the Deacon's assignment. The agreement should also delineate the responsibilities of the parish/institution/ministry toward the Deacon and his spouse. The term of the agreement should also be set forth in the document. (See Appendix C for Written Ministry Agreement Form)

The pastor or person designated by the Bishop, in the case of a specialized ministry, along with the Deacon, his wife, and any lay leadership at the parish or institution, if appropriate, must sign the ministry covenant. The covenant is then submitted through the Deacon registrar/coordinator to the Bishop or Vicar for Clergy for approval.

## **E. Performance Management Process**

1. Creation of Covenant – A written ministry covenant will be created for all Deacons (see D above). This document will be approved and signed by the Deacon and his supervisor. The Deacon's spouse will also be asked to sign acknowledgement of the covenant. The workload described will take into consideration the requirements of Deacon community life and ongoing formation. It will also take into consideration the permanent Deacon's other responsibilities involving family and employment.
2. The Deacon will have discussions with his supervisor to assess the following: clarity of assignment, covenant, and working relationships as needed.
3. Should any problems with the Deacon's performance arise they will be notified of such problems via counseling provided either by the supervisor, Vicariate Deacon or Vicar for Clergy. Should such performance problems continue the supervisor, and Vicar for Clergy will follow these steps in addressing the situation with the Deacon:
  - a) Written notification of the performance issue/problem will be sent to the Deacon. A meeting will take place to discuss the notification and an action plan for improvement will be developed. The action plan will be approved and signed by the Deacon, the supervisor and the Vicar for Clergy.
  - b) Progress on the action plan will be monitored by the supervisor and the appropriate Vicariate Deacon. Further meetings and other documents pertaining to the Deacon's performance on the action plan will be maintained by the supervisor and sent to the Vicar for Clergy for review.
  - c) Should the Deacon's performance become unacceptable, the Deacon's faculties may be suspended by the Bishop upon the recommendation of the Vicar for Clergy. The Vicar for Clergy, Vicariate Deacon and the supervisor will investigate the performance situation and will meet with the Deacon to obtain his input. The outcome will result in a determination of the suitability of the Deacon to continue ministry in the Diocese. The Deacon will then either be reinstated with an updated covenant, reassigned with a new covenant or removed from diaconal ministry in the Diocese of Richmond.

## V. REMUNERATION FOR DEACONS

### A. Introduction

The document *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons and Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons* from the Congregation for Catholic Education, Congregation for the Clergy (1998) discusses two distinct cases involving the remuneration of Deacons. These two cases involve Deacons who are employed full-time professionally in an ecclesial setting by a parish or the Diocese and Deacons who are employed or have been employed in the secular world and are assigned to a parish or ministry on an un-paid basis. The majority of Deacons in the Diocese fall into the second category. However, the Diocese of Richmond has Deacons who fall into both of these categories and each of these situations requires different guidelines regarding remuneration.

### B. Deacons Employed in a Professional Capacity

The *Basic Norms* document states “With regard to married Deacons, the *Code of Canon Law* provides that: ‘married Deacons who dedicate themselves full-time to the ecclesiastical ministry deserve remuneration sufficient to provide for themselves and their families’ and ‘Deacons who are professionally employed are required to provide for their own upkeep from the ensuring emoluments’” (67). Based on these statements the following guidelines pertain to those Deacons who are employed full-time by parishes such as minister of religious education, music minister, parish administrator, pastoral associate, pastoral coordinator, etc., or by the Diocese in a professional setting.

1. Deacons who are employed in parishes or by the Diocese in a professional capacity compete with other applicants for these positions and are employed based on their professional qualifications.
2. In these positions, they are compensated per the Diocese of Richmond guidelines for education and years of experience as any other employee of the Diocese of Richmond. This is done to provide adequately for the Deacon and his family. Benefits, which should include continuing education, would also be included in the negotiations for these positions.
3. The hiring process should be conducted in the same manner as required by the Human Resources Department of the Diocese of Richmond per the document *Called To Work In Harmony*.
4. If the benefits for his employment include an amount for continuing education then the parish to which the Deacon is assigned would be responsible for the amounts for retreats and Deacon gatherings, such as the convocation, as part of his ministry in that parish.

## **C. Deacons Employed in a Secular Setting and Assigned in the Diocese**

The *Basic Norms* states, “Married Deacons who minister full-time or part-time and who receive income from a secular profession which they exercise or have exercised are obliged to provide for themselves and for their families from such income” (76). Based on this norm the following guidelines pertain to Deacons assigned to minister in parishes but are employed full-time or receive substantial paid retirement in the secular world.

1. The Deacon’s service of ministry to the parish will not be compensated unless specific duties requiring reimbursement are agreed to by the pastor and the Deacon. Reimbursement for expenses such as mileage, especially for those Deacons living on a fixed income, should be negotiated with the parish to which the Deacon is assigned.
2. All Deacons assigned in a parish are entitled to funding for retreats, convocation and on-going education, which are a requirement of the Diocese. These amounts are designated by the Diocese each year. It will be the responsibility of the Deacon to provide appropriate documentation in applying for these funds. If a parish is unable to provide for this monetary requirement, arrangements should be made with the Bishop, the Vicar for Clergy and diocesan finance office to provide such assistance as needed.

## **D. Stole Fees**

All stoles fees collected for weddings, baptisms, funerals are to be given to the Church.

## **E. Vacations**

Each Deacon, whether employed in a secular setting and assigned to a parish or ministry within the Diocese or employed by the church in a professional setting, should take a suitable vacation each year from his ministry as a Deacon. This is exclusive of time for retreats and continuing education that are addressed in section VI on continuing formation and education.

## **F. Retirement**

Every Deacon is encouraged to remain active in his clerical ministry to the extent that he is willing and able physically, psychologically and intellectually to do so. A Deacon will be deemed retired from active ministry at the age of 75 but may request voluntary retirement at an earlier age. See paragraph IVC4 for more information about the status of retired Deacon.

1. A Deacon retiring from a full-time professional position in the Church will receive retirement compensation in accord with diocesan guidelines and provisions.

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2. A Deacon retiring from secular employment or already receiving secular retirement will receive no paid retirement from the Church.

## VI. CONTINUING FORMATION AND EDUCATION

### A. Introduction

It is clear from the *Basic Norms* that those who are ordained to the permanent diaconate will accept the process of continual conversion and education as a means for individual spiritual and intellectual growth necessary for ministry in the Church.

The continuing formation of Deacons is a human necessity, which must be seen in continuity with the divine call to serve the Church in the ministry... Indeed, “those who are ordained to the diaconate are obliged to ongoing doctrinal formation...” (63)

Ongoing formation must include and harmonize all dimensions of the life and ministry of the Deacon. (68)

In particular, the spiritual formation of the Deacons should inculcate those attitudes related to the triple diaconia of Word, liturgy and charity. (70)

### B. Continuing Education

1. The Deacon Council, in dialogue with the Bishop and Vicar for Clergy, will determine the personal and professional growth needs of the Deacons and plan a program to meet those needs. The primary program sponsored by the Deacon Council to meet the professional growth needs of Deacons is the Annual Deacon Convocation.
2. In planning this program, the members of the Deacon Council are to keep in mind the needs of the Deacons, as well as the needs of the Diocese and the parishes where Deacons are assigned.
3. In dialogue with the Vicar for Clergy, the Deacon Council chair and Vicariate Deacons will explain these needs, and offer the proposed program to meet these needs.
4. The Deacon Council will inform the Deacons of programs for continuing formation and education available throughout the Diocese, as well as programs offered in other institutions to help meet their continuing formation and education needs. These programs should include Sacred Scripture, Tradition, Liturgy, Canon Law, Homiletics, Sacramental Life of the Church, Social Justice, Bereavement, Pastoral Methodology, Prayer, Liturgy of the Hours and Spiritual Growth.
5. Each Deacon is expected to accrue at least fifteen hours of continuing education/formation credit annually, eight of which must come from item “4”

above. The remaining seven may come from other university courses, bona fide self-study, ministerial conferences, publication of articles or other sources determined and evaluated by the committee. The fifteen hours are not credit hours but actual contact hours spent in qualified educational/learning activities.

6. Formal opportunities for continuing education and formation should be offered at least once a year in a diocesan setting, normally at the Annual Deacon Convocation, where all the Deacons can come together for presentations and discussion offered for their own personal growth, as well as for the deepening and enhancing of their ministry. Since a majority of the Deacons in this Diocese are employed in the secular world, due consideration must be given to time restraints when scheduling formal programs to make them available when most Deacons can attend.
7. Subsequent to ordination, the Deacon's wife is encouraged to share in her husband's growth and education. She may become involved in a ministry with her husband, or she may be involved in a distinct ministry apart from the diaconal ministry of her husband. Both are encouraged to take advantage of growth opportunities and the annual Deacon convocation should offer growth opportunities tailored to the needs of the Deacon wives.
8. The Deacon is expected to keep his own pastor or ministry supervisor informed of his continuing education efforts
9. Deacons will attend the annual Convocation and all regional vicariate level activities.

### **C. Continuing Spiritual Formation**

1. Each Deacon will make an annual retreat. An annual five-day retreat is encouraged; however, a three-day or weekend retreat is sufficient. While it is at times desirable that Deacons experience retreats with other Deacons it is also desirable for Deacons and their wives and Deacons and their families to be provided opportunities for retreats together.
2. Each Deacon should also avail himself of a spiritual director and a theological reflection group or ministerial support group for guidance and encouragement in his journey of spiritual growth, ministry and service.
3. The Deacon council will research and publish a list of possible centers available for retreats.
4. The place of assignment provides the stipend for the Deacon and spouse for the annual retreat and the Deacon's continuing education/formation hours authorized by his pastor or supervisor. (Refer to annual guidelines issued by the Diocese for annual amounts.)

## **VII. CRISIS INTERVENTION AMONG DEACONS**

The following is a process to address crisis intervention among Deacons. It follows the same principles and uses the same team and approach as for priests. Professionals in mental health services rely on the consultation process with other professionals to assure the best quality care for clients. Our team currently consists of three professionals from complementary backgrounds, all of whom are committed to the care of Deacons and who are skilled in the areas of counseling, psychology and clinical social work. This team approach assures objective and quality care for Deacons.

As licensed professionals, all team members are strictly bound to the Code of Ethics in their disciplines, which mandates strict confidentiality, and all have received specific training in this area. The team will be available to all Deacons to answer questions about mental health and counseling on both a personal and professional level.

### **A. Crisis Intervention**

The team helps the Diocese provide a professional response to a wide variety of situations. A set form of methodology and structure allows the Bishop, the Vicar for Clergy, and the regional Episcopal Vicars to respond to difficult or crisis situations effectively.

The team of professionals will assist in situations such as substance abuse and/or addiction, inappropriate sexual behavior and acting out, marital/family problems and any other mental health issues such as depression and affective behavior. They will not intervene in pastoral dispute situations between a Deacon and priest or a parish community. However, they are available to offer advice in pastoral situations, as necessary.

The regional Episcopal Vicar, the Vicar for Clergy, and the Bishop will be notified immediately whenever a crisis arises. The regional Episcopal Vicar or the Vicar for Clergy will notify the team leader who will consult with the other team members to obtain their insights and recommendations and determine a methodology and approach to the crisis. The Vicar for Clergy and the regional Episcopal Vicar will collaborate with the team throughout the process. They and the Bishop will be kept apprised of the situation as it unfolds.

When personal safety, health issues or legal ramifications are involved, the team chair can decide to put together an intervention team immediately. When necessary, any pertinent information about the Deacon's behavioral history will be provided. When intervention takes place, an appropriate treatment plan will be formulated.

If immediate intervention is not necessary, a team member will consult with the Vicar for Clergy and the regional Episcopal Vicar and keep them up to date about the situation.

With the regional Episcopal Vicar, a team member will form a ‘fact-finding’ group to interview the person or persons who have brought concerns forward.

The Deacon and those affected by the situation will always be included in the interview process. The Deacon and pastor or supervisor will be informed about any allegations that have been made. After they have gathered as much information as possible, the fact-finding group will submit a summary report to the Vicar for Clergy and the Bishop. The group will review the situation and outline a course of action.

The group will then submit to the Bishop the recommendations of the team. When an intervention causes the removal of the Deacon from his current assignment, the parish staff will be provided care and direction following the Deacon’s departure. Following an intervention, canonical requirements will be followed so that the rights of the Deacon are always protected.

Special concern should also be shown any victim of a Deacon’s actions, the victim’s family and the parish family that are affected by the sudden departure of a Deacon. A diocesan victim’s assistance coordinator will immediately be consulted.

## **B. Crisis Involving Marital / Family Difficulties**

Marriage is the first vocation of a married Deacon and it is imperative that this vocation be safeguarded. In the case of a permanent Deacon whose marriage/family life is undergoing serious stress, the Vicar for Clergy must be informed and will assess whether the Deacon is to go on inactive status and initiate the appropriate professional referral process. Should the Deacon not wish to comply, the Vicar for Clergy may recommend to the Bishop that the Deacon be placed on inactive status until adequate resolution has been attained. The Vicar for Clergy will determine when such resolution is adequate and when restoration to active ministry may be considered. The professional team will determine the most appropriate options for resolution and offer these recommendations to the Deacon, his spouse and children as indicated. Everything possible should be done to assist the Deacon and his family to resolve the problem. Failure to engage with these recommendations by the Deacon or his family shall be considered non-compliance.

Sometimes a family crisis may lead to separation and even divorce. In both of these cases it is important that those involved, the Deacon, his wife and children be given appropriate pastoral care. This pastoral care should be facilitated by the Vicar for Clergy or another qualified professional and should reflect concern for all involved. It may be necessary for pastoral reasons at a time of separation and divorce for the Deacon to request to be put on inactive status or for the Vicar for Clergy to recommend such an action. A final decision on the inactive status of the Deacon will rest with the Bishop or the Vicar for Clergy acting for the Bishop.

After there has been sufficient time for the Deacon, his wife and children to work through the pain and suffering that is involved in separation and divorce, a Deacon may request to resume active ministry. If, in the judgment of the Vicar for Clergy, the situation has been resolved, and a sufficient amount of time has elapsed to indicate this, the Deacon

may be returned to active status. Restoration to active ministry and assignment shall be made by the Bishop (*National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in The United States*, Chapter 2, p 36 #76).

In all cases of family crisis, due care should be taken to safeguard the dignity of the Deacon, his wife and children and also the well-being of the People of God.

### **C. The Role of Regional Episcopal Vicars in the Process of Crisis Intervention**

The regional Episcopal Vicars represent the Bishop throughout the Diocese, each within the region to which he is appointed. A regional Episcopal Vicar enjoys episcopal jurisdiction and therefore speaks for the Bishop and brings the authority of the Bishop to difficult or crisis situations involving a Deacon.

Whenever a critical situation involving a Deacon might arise, the Bishop, the Vicar for Clergy, the respective regional Episcopal Vicar and Vicariate Deacon will be informed immediately. Likewise, the Bishop and a regional Episcopal Vicar will alert one another when they become aware of a critical situation.

### **D. Pastoral Disputes**

In a pastoral dispute situation between a Deacon and the pastor or parish leadership, the Bishop and the respective regional Episcopal Vicar and the Vicar for Clergy will collaborate in an appropriate course of action. In a situation of this nature, advice will be available to the Bishop and the regional Episcopal Vicar from a crisis team, but the team will not be directly involved in an intervention. The Bishop and the respective regional Episcopal Vicar will determine whether the matter is of more serious proportions, thereby requiring the intervention of a crisis team of professionals. In this case, the process described in section B “Crisis Involving Marital/Family Difficulties” shall be followed.

The respective regional Episcopal Vicar will always take part in the response process from beginning to end, even in those situations that involve the intervention of the crisis team. He will collaborate with the crisis team as it devises a course of action and will participate directly with the fact-finding group. Throughout the entire process, the crisis team will confer with the regional Episcopal Vicar and apprise him of developments as they unfold. The regional Episcopal Vicar will collaborate with the Vicar for Clergy regarding the severity of the situation and whether it warrants the removal of the Deacon from active status. In this case, the process outlined in section B “Crisis Involving Marital/Family Difficulties” shall be followed.

### **E. Legal Considerations**

In order to uphold the rights and protect the interests of all parties, including those of the Diocese itself, the regional Episcopal Vicar, whenever it is appropriate, will see to it that advice and guidance is sought from diocesan legal counsel. All involved in the process,

legal counsel, therapists, vicars, others, will keep the matter confidential so that the good name of the Deacon, any victim and any other innocent party might be protected.

The aim of any response will be to bring about a resolution that is equitable and just for all involved parties. An awareness of the possibility of false accusations will be operative in every case. In each situation, the Bishop, the Vicar for Clergy, and the regional Episcopal Vicar will see to it that great care is taken to gather facts in a way that will safeguard the good name of a Deacon. At the same time, the facts will always be pursued in an impartial manner, ensuring that suitable remedies, required care and equal justice are available to all parties.

## **F. Cost of Counseling or Treatment**

In situations where intervention or counseling is required, the primary source of coverage for this cost is the health insurance of the Deacon. If the Deacon does not have insurance to cover these costs, then the Diocese may assist in covering the cost of the treatment or counseling at the discretion of the Bishop. The details are to be worked out between the Deacon and the Vicar for Clergy or another appropriate diocesan representative.

## **VIII. LEAVE AND WITHDRAWAL FROM MINISTRY**

### **A. Authorized Leave**

It happens at times that a Deacon, in his personal life-journey, may face a critical point of decision regarding his continuing in ministry. In some cases, this can be resolved in the midst of active ministry. When this is not possible, he may seek a leave of absence for a prolonged retreat, a course of studies, or a program designed to address the issues at hand.

The Bishop may grant a leave of absence to a Deacon incardinated in the Diocese. Diocesan faculties are automatically withdrawn, unless otherwise indicated by the Bishop. The Deacon shall not exercise his ministry in public without special authorization of the Bishop. The Deacon must sign an agreement of the conditions of his leave.

If the Deacon is employed by the Diocese in a pastoral position, or other paid position, financial assistance and benefits may be provided with the approval of the Bishop and in accordance with the norms of Canon Law. The Deacon must notify the Vicar for Clergy no later than one month before the leave is to expire to inform him of the results of the leave and his intentions regarding the future.

### **B. Unauthorized Leave**

A Deacon who leaves his assignment without the permission of the Bishop or Vicar for Clergy is considered on an unauthorized leave of absence. An unauthorized leave of absence results in the immediate withdrawal of diaconal faculties and the Deacon is forbidden to exercise any function of diaconal ministry. Salary and all other benefits, if there are any, cease immediately. However, continuation of health insurance received by the Deacon as a result of employment may be negotiated on an individual basis with the Vicar for Clergy.

A return to diaconal ministry shall depend upon the conditions set forth by the Bishop.

### **C. Emergency Leave**

In cases of family emergencies, attempts should be made to notify the pastor, regional Episcopal Vicar or Vicar for Clergy before departure. However, when all attempts at notification fail, a Deacon may presume permission. In the case where a Deacon is responsible for a parish community, the pastoral care of that community should be adequately arranged. A letter explaining the nature of the emergency and the expected length of absence along with contact information, such as address and phone number, should be mailed or emailed to the regional Episcopal Vicar and the Vicar for Clergy prior to departure or as soon as possible thereafter.

## **IX. DEATH OF A DEACON OR DEACON'S WIFE**

### **A. Planning**

Every Deacon should execute a Will so as to distribute and settle his estate appropriately after his death. Each Deacon should also take the time to plan in advance, his wake and funeral service, noting his wishes as to readings, music, attire and other details pertinent thereto. This information should be on file both at the parish of his ministry and with the Office of the Vicar for Clergy.

### **B. Notification of Death, Deacon and Deacon's Wife**

1. The pastor or family should notify the vicariate Deacon and Office of the Vicar for Clergy as soon as possible after the death.
2. The Vicar for Clergy notifies the Bishop, the chancery office, and the *Catholic Virginian*.

### **C. Wake and Funeral of a Deacon**

1. A vigil service should be celebrated. It is recommended that this be conducted by Deacons from the parish, region or by a Deacon delegate of the Deacon Council.
2. The traditional attire for a deceased Deacon in our Diocese is alb and stole. If the family prefers a suit rather than the diaconal attire, their wishes should be respected.
3. If at all possible, the funeral Mass is concelebrated by the Bishop (or his delegate), the Deacon's pastor, the appropriate regional Episcopal Vicar and/or the Vicar for Clergy with the Vicariate Deacon or another Deacon requested by the family assisting. Other Deacons are encouraged to attend in proper vesture.

### **D. Wake and Funeral of a Deacon's Wife or Widow**

The wake and funeral of a Deacon's wife or widow is to be conducted in accordance with the normal practice of the parish in which it is held, presided at by the pastor, honoring to the extent possible, the wishes of the deceased and the Deacon.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: Historical Background of Diaconal Ministry

Historically, the office and ministry of the Deacon has been a distinctive vocation in the Church. From the earliest period of Church life, Deacons were called to assist the apostles in carrying out the mission of Christ in the Church and to see that the needy and the distressed were given assistance (Acts, 6:1-6). The Church Fathers continued to recognize the unique spirit of service given to the Deacon at ordination. Those called to this ancient ministry of the Church filled an important role of service in the early Church. St. Paul refers to the ministry of the Deacon in his *First Letter to Timothy* (1 Tim 3:8-13) and early in the third century Hippolytus refers to the diaconal service of those called to this ministry (*The Apostolic Tradition*). Thus, the permanent diaconate continued as an important ministry in the early Church until the Fifth Century. During this time in the Western Church there was a gradual decrease in the number of those who preferred to remain permanent Deacons rather than advance on to the priesthood. This resulted in the decline of the permanent diaconate to the point where it almost disappeared in the Church in the West. In the Eastern Church, however, the diaconate remained a constant and vibrant ministry (*Ad Pascendum, Apostolic Letter Containing the Norms for the Order of the Diaconate, 1972*).

In modern times, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, provided the impetus for a restoration of this central ministry to the life of the Church in a permanent way. Article 19 of this document describes the duties of the Deacon as so necessary to the life of the Church that it should be restored to its proper and permanent rank in the hierarchy. In a 1967 apostolic letter, *Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem*, Pope Paul VI provided for the implementation of the Council's recommendation. In *Ad Pascendum*, he affirmed what the early writers of the Church wrote to acclaim the dignity of Deacons who gave an outstanding witness of love for Christ and the brethren through their ministry. In that same document, he established specific norms for the restoration of the office of the permanent Deacon to the Church.

In 1998, the Vatican Congregation for Clergy issued *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons*. In this document, the universal Church echoes the conviction of early Christianity about the unique nature of this ministry. The diaconate is an ordained ministry of the Church that configures the one who receives this order to Christ in a particular way. It is a sacrament of apostolic ministry. It is a ministry seen “as a vital ministry in assisting us bishops in the mission of the Church” (Bishop Wilton Gregory, President, U.S. Conference Catholic Bishops, Presidential Address, 11 November 2002). It is also a different ministry from the ministry of priests.

In the years since the Second Vatican Council, Bishop Walter F. Sullivan, D.D., the eleventh bishop of Richmond, chose to ordain a very limited number of men to the permanent diaconate on an individual basis for specific ministries and assignments. There were also a number of permanent Deacons who relocated to the Diocese of Richmond because of job, retirement or family reasons. During the 1990s, under the initiative of Deacon Ed Hanzlik, the Deacons and their wives formed the *Richmond Diaconal Community* meeting several times each year for prayer, dinner, fellowship, and an annual retreat.

In the spring of 1997, an ad hoc committee was formed to explore the need for and possibility of beginning a formation class, and a recommendation was made to Bishop Sullivan and the Presbyteral Council that this be pursued with diligence. Two co-directors for the program were recommended, Rev. John Leonard and Rev. Mr. Michael Ellerbrock, who were subsequently appointed by the bishop. In partnership with St. Meinrad School of Theology, aspirants were accepted in the fall of 1999. In February and March of 2003, forty-nine men were ordained to the Permanent Diaconate in the Diocese of Richmond. The start of any future Deacon formation class was passed to the next bishop.

Bishop Francis X. DiLorenzo became the twelfth bishop of Richmond in 2004 and decided to continue a Deacon Formation Program. In 2007, Deacon Robert Ewan was appointed as Deacon Director working under the Vicar for Clergy. A Deacon Council was established to be the conduit between the Deacons and the Bishop to address issues and concerns. St. Leo University was selected to provide the academic preparation with a pastoral component in the third and fourth year being addressed by priests and Deacons of the Diocese. Recognizing the expansive size of the Diocese and the need for a more local presence, the Deacon community was divided into the Eastern, Central, and Western Vicariates and a Vicariate Deacon was appointed by the Bishop for each vicariate to assist in the selection, formation, placement, and administration of the diaconate.

Discernment and selection for Deacon aspirants recommenced in 2007. Classes for the 4-year formation program started in 2008. Academically eligible candidates earned a Master's Degree in Theology at the conclusion of the educational program, while others received certificates of completion of the academic program. New cohorts followed, and 49 men were ordained in 2012, 18 in 2013, and 18 in 2015 at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. Candidates who completed their formation in late 2017 are expected to be ordained by His Excellency Bishop Barry C. Knestout in September 2018. A class was begun in September 2017 with formation to be completed in August 2021.

**Appendix B:**  
**Organization of Diaconate in Diocese of Richmond**  
Roles and Responsibilities

## **Vicariate Deacon**

- Maintain parish affiliation
- Coordinate community life program
- Work with Vicar for Clergy to ensure
  - Clarity of assignments
  - Covenant
  - Working relationships
  - Conflict resolution
  - Performance management
  - Proper Discipline and intervention

## **Deacon Council**

- Elected by diaconate
- Deacon and spouse representation
- Advisory to the Bishop through Vicar for Clergy and Vicariate Deacons
- One Standing committee—Convocation committee responsible for annual convocation site selection, accommodations, speaker selection, agenda, liturgical celebrations, etc.
- Ad Hoc Committees as needed
- Open ear to the diaconate and the Diocese

## Appendix C

Permanent Deacons are ordained to a ministry of service for the Diocese as a whole and commit to serving the people of God either in a parish, specified ministry or other institution within the Diocese. Permanent Deacons as ministers are expected to place a high priority on their diaconal assignments. Their vocation to the diaconate, while secondary to their marriage vocation, is a commitment they have made to God and to God's church and should be treated as such. The Diocese of Richmond recognizes that permanent Deacons have responsibilities to their family and to their work profession, and that their work is often necessary in order to provide for their family. The Diocese supports a proper balance in the life of the Deacons between family requirements and diaconal assignments. This covenant is set up to outline the responsibilities of the Deacon which includes attendance at the annual Deacon Convocation and Vicariate Meetings. It is to be approved by the Deacon, the person to whom the Deacon is responsible, the Deacon's wife, his pastor and the Deacon director and should be reviewed and updated according to the provisions in the Deacon manual.

Parish: \_\_\_\_\_

Period of Service covered: From: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Deacon \_\_\_\_\_ will be involved in the following

Liturgical Duties & Responsibilities:

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Ministry of Charity:

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Other Areas of Ministry & Responsibility

Ministry	Responsibility

Relying on the Holy Spirit to enable us to fulfill our commitments, we enact this agreement.

Deacon: \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

*(If other than Pastor)*

Deacon's Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_ Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix D:**  
**DEACON’S COUNCIL CONSTITUTION**  
**FOR THE**  
**RICHMOND DIACONATE COMMUNITY**

Preface

We as Deacons recognize and declare that we have been called in communion with the Bishop and his Presbyters and sealed by the Sacrament of Holy Orders to serve the people of God in the Ministry of Liturgy, of Word and of Service. Together with our spouses, we as ordained permanent Deacons in the Diocese of Richmond, Virginia, further recognize that we are brothers and sisters of all people and belong to the one Body of Christ. Though the building up of the Kingdom has been entrusted to all, we have been called to model the virtues of charity, fidelity and service. To that end we, with our spouses, commit and form ourselves into a fellowship association under our Bishop and we offer ourselves in service to all humankind in the name of Jesus Christ. This fellowship association is hereafter referred to as the Richmond Diaconate Community.

In order to carry out its purposes, we hereby establish a Deacon’s Council for the Richmond Diaconate Community and set forth the following CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS.

Article I  
Name

The liaison group representing the Richmond Diaconate Community shall be called the Deacon Council of the Catholic Diocese of Richmond (hereafter referred to as the “Council”.)

Article II  
Purpose

The purpose of the Council shall be:

- A. To express the formed opinion of the permanent Deacons of the Diocese (hereafter referred to as “Deacons”) to our Bishop so as to give him effective assistance by serving as an advisory body on the ministerial life and professional activities of the Deacons.
- B. To study, develop and implement policies and programs at the Bishop’s direction or at the initiative of the Council with the Bishop’s approval which will help the Deacons, together with their spouses live and work more effectively in their ministry.
- C. To ensure continued spiritual, ministerial and professional growth of the Deacons in their ministry of Liturgy, Word and Service.

- D. To promote and maintain contact and communication among the diaconal community providing encouragement and support, and a forum to exchange views, express problems, and share vision.
- E. To promote an understanding of the diaconate among, and full cooperation with, the presbyterate and laity in the ministry of the Church.

Article III  
Membership from which the Council Emanates

- A. Only active Deacons in the Diocese of Richmond are eligible to vote for members of the Council.
- B. Only active Deacons in the Diocese of Richmond are eligible for election to the Council.
- C. For purposes of the Constitution and By-Laws, an active Deacon is defined as one who has faculties in the Diocese of Richmond and is actively involved in ministry in the Diocese.

Article IV  
Structure of the Council

The Council shall be made up of the following members:

- A. Nine (9) elected members from the Richmond Diaconal Community.
  - 1. A slate of nominees shall be developed in each regional vicariate, one (1) month prior to the annual Convocation of Deacons by caucus of Deacons within that respective vicariate. As much as possible, membership on the Council shall be proportional to the number of active Deacons in each regional vicariate within the Diocese. Regional vicariates are defined in the Official Diocesan Directory as being made up of the following Regions:
    - a. Eastern Vicariate: LPAs 1-7
    - b. Central Vicariate: LPAs 8-13
    - c. Western Vicariate: LPAs 14-19
  - 2. Term of service is for three years and a member may serve two consecutive terms. After this, a member may not be re-elected for a period of three years. Initially, three members shall be elected for one year, three elected for two years and three for three years. Thereafter, terms are staggered so that one-third (1/3) of members are elected each year. Election shall be by secret ballot with the winner receiving a simple majority of those voting.

3. Should an elected member be unable to complete his term, the chairman, in consultation with the other members of the Council, shall appoint another eligible Deacon to fill the unexpired term.
- B. Three spouses serving in an advisory capacity (one from each vicariate).
1. These members shall be elected by and from among the spouses within the Richmond Diaconate Community in a manner determined by them.
  2. Their term of service shall be for three years and a spouse may serve two consecutive terms. After this, they may not serve for a period of three years. Initially, one spouse shall be chosen for one year, one for two years and one for three years. Thereafter, their terms are staggered so that one is chosen each year.
- C. No more than two (2) representatives from the active formation group of candidates for the permanent diaconate in the Diocese.
1. Candidates are eligible to serve from the beginning of their third year of formation and shall serve until their ordination, at which time they may be elected under the criteria of Article IV, Section A.
  2. Candidate representatives shall have voice but no vote on the Council and they may not be elected to office.
- D. The Diocesan Bishop as President of the Council.  
 E. The Vicariate Deacons  
 F. The Vicar for Clergy in an advisory capacity.

Article V  
Officers and Duties

- A. The President of the Council shall be the Diocesan Bishop.
- B. The Council shall elect a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary from the number outlined in Structure of the Council, Article IV, Section A.
1. With the exception of the President, Officers shall serve for one (1) year and may be re- elected to no more than two (2) more consecutive terms.
  2. Officers (except the President) shall be elected at the next meeting of the Council after convocation. So that no gap shall occur in leadership, officers shall serve until their successors are chosen.
  3. Should a vacancy occur in one of the offices before a term is complete, it shall be filled from within the remaining Council members.

C. Duties of the officers shall be:

1. President

- a. Convene and preside over meetings of the Council when in attendance.
- b. Place matters of concern on the agenda of the Council.
- c. Accept or reject (except where otherwise provided by Canon Law) the results of the Council's deliberations and promulgate official decisions arising therefrom.

2. Chairman

- a. Call council meetings.
- b. 10 days prior to a meeting the Chairman in consultation with the Office of the Bishop will create an agenda and forward it to Council Members
- c. Convene and preside over meetings of the Council not presided over by the President.
- d. Function as principal liaison between the Council, Vicar for Clergy and the Diocesan Bishop.
- e. Appoint members to committees and coordinate their work.
- f. Represent Deacons of the Diocese on appropriate occasions.
- g. Perform all other duties pertaining to this office.

3. Vice-Chairman

- a. Perform the duties of the Chairman in his absence.
- b. Develop election procedures for approval by the Council and conduct Council elections.
- c. Assist the Chairman as needed.

4. Secretary

- a. Keep records, minutes and list of action items of all Council meetings.
- b. Send action items from meeting to Council members within 7 days of each meeting.
- c. Forward meeting minutes to Council members within 2 weeks of each meeting.
- d. After minutes are approved forward minutes to Bishop and all Deacons.
- e. Give adequate notification of all meetings to Council members.
- f. Maintain a roll of all Council members together with their terms of office.

Article VI  
Meetings and Quorum

- A. The Council shall meet on a schedule determined by the Council, but, in any event, shall meet at least quarterly throughout the year. The President or the Chairman may call special meetings.

- B. A quorum shall consist of five (5) voting members present at any properly designated meeting.
- C. Ideally, decisions within the Council will be reached by consensus. If a consensus cannot be reached, a vote will be called in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

#### Article VII Committees

The Council may create committees as necessary to carry out regular and special projects pertaining to the Richmond Diaconate Community including but not limited to planning and oversight of Communication, Fellowship, and Diaconal Life and Formation. There shall be a Convocation Committee which shall be a standing committee.

#### Article VIII Amendments

This Constitution and By-Laws may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the Council and approval of the Bishop. Petitions for amendments may be submitted for consideration by at least ten active Deacons, by the Council or by the Bishop.

#### Article IX Approval of Constitution, By-Laws and Amendments

- A. This Constitution, By-Laws and subsequent amendments take effect after review and ratification and approval of the Diocesan Bishop.
- B. The Deacons' Council is a recognized organization of the Diocese of Richmond and functions at the pleasure of the Diocesan Bishop.