

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA



**SAINT STEPHEN
DEACON & MARTYR**

**PERMANENT DIACONATE
DIRECTORY OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

VERSION 3.0

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References

Canon or CCL - *The Code of Canon Law*, Canon Law Society of America, 1983

LG - *Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, 21 November 1964

ND or National Directory - *The National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States*, USCCB, 2004

www.nccbuscc.org/deacon - Website maintained by the Secretariat for the Diaconate, National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Introduction

Section 1. Issuing Authority

This *Directory of Policies and Procedures for Deacons* is issued under the authority of the Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta.

Section 2. Applicability

This *Directory* applies to all deacons (and deacon candidates) actively engaged in ministry in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta.

For information on the selection of candidates and formation see also the *Archdiocese of Atlanta Formation Directory*.

Section 3. Background

Jesus the Christ, on the night He was betrayed, established the sacramental and communal Church with the First Eucharist. In the first generation of the Church, the Holy Spirit led the Apostles to select seven men who could free the bishops of their more secular and temporal duties. Historical testimony of the generations that followed shows that the deacon at all times had a special link with the bishop, as the diaconate quickly became a recognized and important office in the Church.

In the centuries that followed, the Church continued to grow under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Likewise, the work of the deacons evolved into three major areas: Sacrament, Word, and Service. Regarding liturgy, they fulfilled such roles as proclaiming the Gospel at Holy Mass and exhorting the faithful, directing the Prayers of the Faithful, assisting the celebrant at the altar, and distributing Holy Communion. In regard to doctrine, teaching duties for deacons included giving instructions to prospective converts for initiation into the Christian community. In regard to charity, the deacons' work consisted of reporting the needs of the community to the bishop and bringing his response and assistance to those in need and want.

Over the centuries, the diaconate was displaced by seminarians in their final year of preparation for the priesthood. These were termed "transitional" deacons.

In Rome, in 1959, Caritas International requested that the "permanent" diaconate be restored and from 4-16 October 1963, the subject was discussed during the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council. On 29 September 1964, in five separate votes, the Council Fathers approved the restoration of the diaconate as a permanent Order, in its own right, a full part of the three-fold hierarchy of Holy Orders: bishop, priest, and deacon.

On 18 June 1967, Pope Paul VI issued "*Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem*," a document that re-established the permanent diaconate for the Western Church. In May of 1968, the Roman Catholic bishops of the United States petitioned the Holy See for permission to restore the diaconate in our country. The Apostolic Delegate informed our bishops on 30 August 1968 that Pope Paul VI had acceded to their request.

Following the direction of the Second Vatican Council, the Archdiocese of Atlanta re-established the diaconate with the ordination of its first deacons in 1977.

This *Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta Permanent Diaconate Directory of Policies and Procedures* reflects many hours of prayer, discussion, study, and collaboration among many people within the

Archdiocese of Atlanta. This *Directory* was created to bring into compliance a diaconate that reflects the *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons* and *The Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons*, two documents given to the Universal Church by the Congregation for Catholic Education and the Congregation for the Clergy (1998).

With the promulgation of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (19 March 2003), the National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States (26 December 2004), and the installation of Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory as the 6th Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Atlanta (January 17, 2005), this Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta Permanent Diaconate Directory of Policies and Procedures has been developed, published and promulgated. It is a living document, to be revised as the diaconate continues to evolve in our Archdiocese and continues to strengthen the ministerial life of the Universal Church.

Chapter I. Mission Statement of the Permanent Diaconate of the Archdiocese of Atlanta

Section I. Mission Statement

The Diaconate in the Archdiocese of Atlanta is understood to be an integral part, not a supplementary one, of the ministry of the Archdiocese of Atlanta and its institutions.

The ministry of the permanent deacon represents in a sacramental manner the servant role of the church-at-large, and of the Archdiocese of Atlanta in particular, according to its multicultural and multilingual expressions.

The permanent deacons will express their commitment to the "local church" and to the other pastoral ministers of the Archdiocese of Atlanta by collaborating in the common ministry and offering support in the exercise of their own ministry.

Section 2. Implementation

A deacon in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta will serve at the will of the Archbishop according to the pastoral needs of the Archdiocese.

It will be the privilege and duty of the pastors of the Archdiocese (and other ministers in leadership roles) to request the service of the deacon through the Office of the Permanent Diaconate.

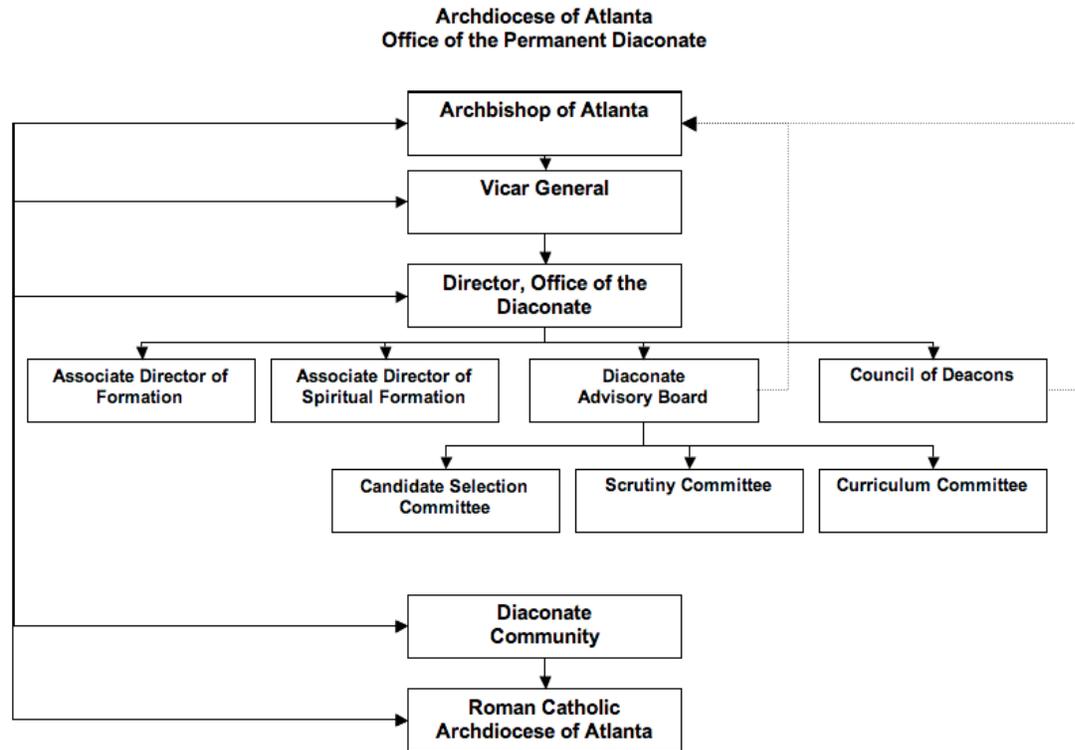
Each deacon will be assigned a supervisor to whom he will be accountable.

A *Letter of Appointment* (see Appendix 8) will be issued by the Archbishop, after consultation with the deacon and the deacon's pastor/supervisor.

The ministry of the deacon will be performed according to the gifts of the individual deacon and his state of life.

Chapter 2. Structure of the Diaconate in the Archdiocese of Atlanta

Section I. Organizational Chart



Section 2. Diaconate Formation Advisory Board

The Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Atlanta has established the Diaconate Formation Advisory Board to assist him, through his designate, the Director of the Permanent Diaconate, in the selection of candidates, and the assignment and evaluation of aspirants and candidates.

The Diaconate Formation Advisory Board may be charged with the responsibility of advising on matters of selection, curriculum, evaluations of performance, leaves, conflict resolution, complaint management, disciplinary action, suspensions.

The Diaconate Formation Advisory Board is limited to a consultative role. There may be matters that are referred to other entities or otherwise not referred to the Deacon Formation Advisory Board.

Section 3. Office of the Permanent Diaconate

1. Composition of the Office

The Office of the Permanent Diaconate consists of:

- a. Director of the Permanent Diaconate
- b. Associate Director of Formation
- c. Spiritual Director of the Permanent Diaconate
- d. Administrative Support

2. Responsibilities of the Office

The Office of the Permanent Diaconate is responsible for:

- a. Assessing and meeting the developmental needs of those involved in diaconal ministry
- b. Offering programs for spiritual growth and enrichment for the deacon
- c. Providing services for the personal development of a deacon (and, if married, his spouse and for the sustenance of their marriage and family relationships)
- d. Assessing the Church's ministry, the pastoral needs of parishes/agencies and other institutions within the Diocese insofar as diaconal ministry may meet such needs
- e. Evaluation and personal review of all deacons ministering within the Archdiocese of Atlanta
- f. Assisting individual deacons and staffs in the areas of conflict management and arbitration
- g. Formation of personnel for the future diaconal ministry within the Archdiocese of Atlanta
- h. Fostering awareness regarding the potential and achievements of diaconal ministry.
- i. To assist in the implementation of the Vatican directives and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishop's National Directory on the Formation, Life, and Ministry of Deacons in the Catholic Church.

3. The Director of the Permanent Diaconate – Description

- a. Reports to the Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta, and in close collaboration with the Vicar General of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta
- b. Administers the Permanent Diaconate within the Archdiocese. He shall be responsible for planning and directing all activities and operations of the Office. He shall authorize action, after consultation with the Archbishop of Atlanta, for the good of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta, led by the Archbishop and his successors. The Director must be a cleric.
- c. With the Associate Director of Formation and Spiritual Director, the Diaconate Advisory Board, and other staff, plans, develops, and coordinates programs that meet the needs and interests of the Permanent Diaconate community.
- d. Ensures that the Archbishop and/or his designee are kept informed of plans, directions, and functions of the diaconate and the Office of the Permanent Diaconate.
- e. Prepares budgets and determines allocation of funds for programs, staff, supplies, equipment, and other expenses to operate the Office of the Permanent Diaconate in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

- f. Acts as *ex officio* member of the Deacon Council in order to keep the diaconate community abreast of happenings in the diaconate; to seek their advice and consultation.
 - g. Acts as *ex officio* member of the Deacon Personnel Board in order to provide support and consultation regarding Deacon assignments and personnel matters
 - h. Meets with the Vicar General to review the affairs of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate and consults on matters pertaining to the Office.
 - i. Assists the Associate Director of Formation and the Spiritual Director as well as the Diaconate Advisory Board's Committee on Admissions and Acceptance in the identification of potential deacon candidates.
 - j. In consultation with the Associate Director of Formation, Diaconate Advisory Board, and other advisors, proposes candidates to the Archbishop of Atlanta for ordination to the Order of Deacon.
 - k. Collaborates with the Archbishop and/or designee to encourage and promote diaconate programs.
 - l. Ensures frequent communication with the entire diaconate community including publication of quarterly newsletter, *The Beacon*.
 - m. Implements appointments and evaluations with the pastor/supervisor of deacon's parish/institution.
 - n. Collaborates with deacons and their pastor/supervisor in addressing issues and/or concerns in the performance of their diaconal ministry.
 - o. Keeps abreast of international, national, regional, and local developments that have an impact on the diaconate and disseminates information as appropriate.
 - p. Available to deacons and/or spouses to listen to their ideas, opinions, and concerns.
 - q. Proposes policies and procedures relating to the diaconate for the Archbishop's approval
4. Associate Director of Formation – Description
- a. Reports to the Director of the Permanent Diaconate;
 - b. Coordinates, with the Director of the Permanent Diaconate, Spiritual Director as well as the Diaconate Formation Advisory Board's Committee on Admissions and Acceptance the identification of potential deacon candidates;
 - c. With Diaconate Formation Advisory Board Curriculum and Faculty Committee, plans, develops, and implements the program for the formation of aspirants and candidates for the Permanent Diaconate;
 - d. Coordinates with the Diaconate Formation Advisory Board's Scrutiny and Evaluation Committee the ongoing assessment and evaluation of the aspirants and candidates; providing information and support to the deliberations regarding recommendations to the Archbishop relating to the Admission into Candidacy, Institution of Reader, Institution of Acolyte and ordination to the Order of Deacon;
 - e. Assists the Director in proposing policies and procedures relating to the diaconate for the Archbishop's approval.
 - f. Acts as *ex officio* member of the Deacon Council in order to keep the diaconate community abreast of happenings in formation and to seek their advice and consultation;

- g. Acts as *ex officio* member of the Deacon Personnel Board in order to provide support and consultation regarding Deacon assignments and personnel matters;
- h. Available to aspirants/candidates and/or their spouses to listen to their ideas, opinions, and concerns;
- i. Coordinates with the Diaconate Formation Advisory Board's Enculturation Committee to assist in the promotion of the Permanent Diaconate as a Vocation among the diverse communities represented within the Archdiocese;
- j. Conducts one on one evaluation reviews with each aspirant and candidate on an annual basis; providing them with a composite overview of their progress in formation;
- k. Coordinates the selection of Deacon Mentors and Spiritual Directors for the aspirants and candidates;
- l. With the Director of the Office of the Diaconate, Diaconate Formation Advisory Board and Deacon Council, reviews and evaluates the deacon formation and continuing education programs;
- m. Provides scheduling of aspirants and candidates in response to requests for assistance at diocesan functions;
- n. Works on special projects and assignments as designated by the Director of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate

5. Spiritual Director for the Permanent Diaconate – Description

- a. The Spiritual Director, who must be a priest, assists the Associate Director of Formation by coordinating the entire spiritual formation program, giving it unity and direction;
- b. He provides support to the Associate Director of Formation in arranging for individual spiritual direction of each aspirant and candidate.
- c. He also may serve as a spiritual director for an aspirant/or candidate.
- d. He provides an orientation to the spiritual dimension in aspirant and candidate formation to other priest spiritual directors, who have been chosen by the aspirants or candidates with the approval of the Archbishop.
- e. The director of spiritual formation provides for the liturgical life and prayer of the aspirant and candidate communities, making appropriate provisions for the celebration of the Eucharist, the Liturgy of the Hours, and opportunities for celebration of the sacrament of penance in formation gatherings.
- f. He is also responsible for retreats and days of recollection, assuring that they are well planned and carefully executed.
- g. The Spiritual Director for the Permanent Diaconate is nominated by the Associate Director of Formation and is approved and appointed by the Archbishop.
- h. The director of spiritual formation must be dedicated to the church's *diakonia* and be particularly knowledgeable of the diaconate and its mission within the Church. He should possess formal training in spirituality and related areas, including ascetical and spiritual theology, pastoral counseling, and referral skills.

6. Deacon Council

The Deacon Council of the Archdiocese of Atlanta was established to serve as an advisory body to the Archbishop regarding the formation, ministry, and life of deacons in the Diocese.

It is intended to provide a forum for the input of deacons, their wives and widows, their families, pastors, parishes, and the whole community of the faithful. The Council shall assist the Archbishop and his staff in planning, coordinating, and evaluating all aspects of diaconal life and ministry, especially the post-ordination educational and spiritual formation of deacons. (For additional information, see Appendix I)

7. Committees

Committees are appointed, as required, to conduct particular projects or tasks. They may be formed by order of the Director of the Permanent Diaconate, Diaconate Advisory Board, or Deacon Council.

8. The Deacon

The deacon exercises his ministry within a specific pastoral context – the communication and mission of a diocesan church. He is in direct relationship with the diocesan bishop with whom he is in communication and under whose authority he exercises his ministry. In making the promise of respect and obedience to his bishop, the deacon takes as his model Jesus the Christ, who became the servant of His Father. The diocesan bishop also enters into a relationship with the deacon since the deacon is his collaborator in the service of God's people. It is, therefore, a particular responsibility of the bishop to provide for the pastoral care of the deacons of his diocese. The Bishop discharges this responsibility both personally and through the Director of the Permanent Diaconate.

The Deacon's duties may include service within the Archdiocese, at a Parish and/or within his community. The duties of each Deacon are described within any appointment letters received from the Archbishop and/or within his Parish Agreement (Appendix 8)

9. Bi-Ritual Deacons

- o. The bi-ritual indult of faculties is not granted by Rome to deacons, but by mutual consent of the proper ordinaries.
- p. When a deacon of the Eastern Catholic Churches is granted bi-ritual faculties to assist in the Roman Catholic Church, the theological understanding of the Holy Sacraments and the Order of the Diaconate in the Eastern Catholic Churches is to be respected. Practically, a deacon of the Eastern Catholic Churches is not to be allowed to solemnize marriages in the Roman Catholic Church.
- q. A deacon of another ritual Catholic Church receives faculties from the Archbishop of Atlanta after that deacon's proper ordinary has granted him permission to serve as a deacon in this Diocese.
- r. Bi-ritual deacons are obligated by all the norms and directives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta while functioning within this ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

10. Extern Deacons

Extern deacons are defined as those deacons who are incardinated in another diocese and are seeking faculties within the Archdiocese of Atlanta. Deacons, who are active in ministry, hold faculties in, and are in good standing in their diocese of incardination, must reside within the Archdiocese of Atlanta for a minimum period of six (6) months before formally requesting faculties and assignment.

Section 4. Deacon Personnel Board

The Deacon Personnel Board works in consultation with the Director, Office of the Diaconate to set and apply policy regarding deacon assignments, deacon ministry reviews and deacon status. This includes deacon initial assignments, deacon transfers, diaconal assignments and agreements, ministry reviews and the change of status of individual deacons. (For additional information, see Appendix 10)

Section 5. Deacon Widows Committee

1. Purpose

The Deacon Widows Committee seeks to build community among deacon widows through on-going communications, spiritual formation, prayer, fraternity, and mutual care. The Committee shall support the ministry of the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Atlanta and shall not engage in any activity or promote any cause contrary to the mission of the Church of Atlanta or the teachings of the Holy Mother Church.

2. Description

The Deacon Widows Committee serves the spiritual, social, and care needs of the widows of deacons in the Archdiocese of Atlanta. The Committee promotes a continued association among widows and the larger diaconal community by facilitating their attendance and involvement of widows in all diaconal events and organizing special activities specifically for widows through such activities as: (1) days of reflection, prayer and retreat, (2) bereavement support, (3) ministry of care for widows who are ill, elderly, lonely, or otherwise in need, (4) recognition of birthdays, special occasions, holidays, anniversaries of the death of their husbands, and otherwise continue to celebrate life with the widows, (5) sponsorship of luncheons, day trips, and other social events, (6) opportunities to serve the community of deacons through prayer and assisting the diaconal community and the Church of Atlanta. With the exception of the Chair and Co-Chair, members of the Committee need not be widows or wives of deacons.

3. Chair

The Chair is appointed by the Director of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate for a term of three (3) years. The Chair of the Committee shall be a widow of a deacon. The Chair shall call the meetings of the Committee, set agendas, promote the ministry of widows, appoint the members of the Committee, and otherwise direct the business of the Committee. The Chair shall make an annual report to the Director of the Office of the Diaconate.

4. Co-Chair

The Co-chair is appointed by the Chair for a term that coincides with her own term. The Co-Chair assists the Chair with her duties and acts as Chair in her absence. Should the Chair resign or otherwise be unable to serve, the Co-Chair assumes the office of Chair for the remainder of her term. The Co-Chair must be a widow of a deacon.

5. Secretary-Treasurer

The Secretary-Treasurer shall maintain necessary records, conduct correspondence at the direction of the Chair, keep the financial records of the Committee and other such duties as assigned by the Chair.

6. Sub-committees

The Chair may appoint and dissolve sub-committees which have specific tasks such as organizing a retreat, prayer tree luncheon, and any others needed to carry out the deacon widows' ministry and the work of the Deacon Widows Committee.

Chapter 3. Policies and Procedures

Section I. Assignment and Ministry

1. Policies

- a. All deacons are ordained to serve the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta, not a particular parish or institution.
- b. The Archbishop of Atlanta makes the final determination for the assignment of each deacon, with the assistance of the Office of the Diaconate, in accordance with the needs of the Archdiocese and the gifts and abilities of the deacon.
- c. Deacons will carry out their assigned ministry under the direction of a pastor/supervisor. The pastor is asked to report to the Director of the Permanent Diaconate or the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy any substantial matters involving the changing of a deacon's assignment or parish duties that are not addressed in the deacon's evaluation.
- d. Assignments will be made in a manner that ensures the proper exercise and balance of liturgical and pastoral functions.
- e. Every effort will be made to assign deacons within a reasonable proximity and travel time to their residence.
- f. Deacons may be employed at parishes, however, prior to employing a deacon, the pastor (or his designee) will consult with the Archbishop or Director of Deacon Personnel. This also applies to termination of a deacon's employment at the parish.
- g. A deacon who has been assigned outside of a parish for his primary ministry (i.e. hospital, prison, diocesan office, etc.) is usually also given a liturgical assignment to a parish. This allows the exercise of his liturgical ministries (i.e. assisting at Holy Mass, Holy Baptisms, officiating at weddings and funerals, leading prayer services, participation during the Triduum, etc.) when the deacon is available and with the consent of the pastor. This parish is typically his parish of residence.

2. Faculties

A faculty is a grant by a higher authority enabling a person to act in a way that the recipient would not otherwise be empowered or authorized to act. Upon Diaconate ordination or incardination into the Archdiocese, the Archbishop will grant diaconal faculties. At the recommendation of the Director of The Office of the Diaconate, the Chancery issues the letter granting the faculties of the Diocese. Faculties normally are granted to those who are in "active" ministry or retired.

Deacons must formally receive faculties from the Archbishop of Atlanta prior to exercising any regularly assigned ministry within the Archdiocese. (See Appendix 4)

3. Letter of Appointment

- a. The Letter of Appointment, issued by the Archbishop, is used as the framework for the concurrence between the deacon and pastor/supervisor.
- b. Every deacon ministering in the Archdiocese of Atlanta is required to have a current Letter of Appointment in effect, a copy of which is maintained at the Office of the Permanent Diaconate.

- c. Ministry is exercised in accordance with the spirit of the letter. Significant changes in ministry are undertaken only after consultation with the Director of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate and the deacon's pastor/supervisor.

4. Installation

The formal assignment of a deacon to a parish is usually celebrated at a Mass at that parish. During the Holy Mass, the deacon is presented to the parish, usually by the Pastor.

Section 2. Status

Every deacon in the Archdiocese of Atlanta will have a unique status in reference to his activity and ministry. The following are the valid Status assignments:

- a. **Active** – A deacon who is functioning within the parish, agency, or institution to which he is assigned and is fulfilling liturgical, ministerial, and staff functions.
- b. **Suspended** – A deacon that has been relieved of all responsibility by the Ordinary or his representative for any ecclesiastical office or function, as well as participating in active ministry. He may not function or represent himself as a deacon while this status is in effect. This is usually a temporary withdrawal from ministry without seeking laicization. Faculties are revoked or cease pending resolution of the reason(s) for the leave of absence. The Chancery will notify the deacon of this status.
- c. **Deceased** – A deacon incardinated in the Archdiocese who has died.
- d. **Laicized** – A deacon who either voluntarily or involuntarily is returned to the lay state by the Holy Father at his own request with the Archbishop's endorsement or at the request of the Archbishop. The Chancery will notify the deacon of this status.
- e. **Senior** – A deacon who has attained the age of 75 or who has requested Senior status and been granted that status by the Archbishop, A Senior Deacon may, or may not retain diaconate faculties based on the judgment of the Archbishop. The Chancery will notify the deacon of this status.
 - a. **Senior Deacon with Assignment**
 - b. **Senior Deacon with Faculties**
 - c. **Senior Deacon without Faculties**
- f. **Personal Leave of Absence** – A deacon who, by his own request, has been granted authorization by the Archbishop to withdraw from active diaconal ministry for a fixed period of time. The exercise of diaconate faculties is not permitted during the temporary leave without the expressed written permission of the Archbishop. The Chancery will notify the deacon of this status.

Section 3. Title

The USCCB has determined that in all forms of address, the appropriate title for deacons is "Deacon". (*National Directory*, 88) In correspondence he is addressed as "Reverend Mr." with his first and last name. The deacon's wife has no proper title. When signing official documents, such as Marriage Licenses it is recommended that the title "Reverend Mr." be used.

Section 4. Attire

According to Canon Law (Canons, 282, 288), deacons are not obligated to wear ecclesiastical garb (clerical shirt and Roman collar). Because most deacons are prominent and active in secular professions and society, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) suggests that deacons resemble the lay faithful in dress. However, each diocesan bishop will determine and promulgate any exceptions, as well as specify the appropriate clerical attire if it is to be worn. (*National Directory*, 89).

In the Archdiocese of Atlanta, Deacons in ministerial, but non-liturgical roles may wear the roman collar, provided they have the permission of the pastor of their assigned parish.

Section 5. Liturgical Attire

For the Sacred Liturgy, deacons will vest with dignity and in a worthy manner in accordance with the prescribed liturgical norms. The dalmatic is the normal vestment of the deacon for the celebration of Holy Mass.

The dalmatic may be omitted either out of necessity or for a less solemn liturgy (i.e. weekday Mass, Liturgy of the Hours, etc.). The dalmatic is worn over the stole and alb. The stole is never omitted. All vestments will be of a professional quality and design, and will be clean and pressed. Dalmatics, stoles, and albs will be of a simple and tasteful design suitable to the Order of Deacon. Elaborate and personal symbols are not appropriate.

Albs worn by deacons will be white or off-white (cream) in color and will be simple and not ornate, nor with excessively full sleeves. The alb will be tied at the waist with a cincture unless it is made to fit without one. The alb should cover the deacon's shirt at the neck.

A vested deacon represents the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta and his accompanying civil attire will reflect the dignity of his vocation. T-shirts, shorts, sport wear and sport shoes are not appropriate for a deacon representing the Diocese at Sacred Liturgy.

Section 6. Post-Ordination Supervised Ministry and Formation

I. Requirements for Newly Ordained Deacons

- a. For the first five (5) years following ordination, deacons will exercise their ministry assignment under the supervision of the Director of the Permanent Diaconate and the pastor of the parish where they are assigned. During this time the newly ordained deacons enter into a mandatory, directed period of post-ordination formation. This is to ensure a smooth transition from pre-ordination formation to a life-long post-ordination formation. This initial post-ordination formation is designed to provide the newly ordained deacon with support during the early years of his ministry.
- b. During the first three (3) years following ordination, each newly ordained deacon must stay in contact with the Deacon Mentor used in the final years of formation or another suitable Deacon Mentor approved by the Director of the Permanent Diaconate. The mentor is not a participant in the supervision and evaluation process during this period, but rather a friend on the diaconal journey, a good listener, and a tutor. The deacon and mentor will stay in ongoing communication and will meet as often as needed, but at least on a bi-monthly basis.

2. Supervised Deacon Ministry Plan

Prior to assignment by the Archbishop, the candidate for ordination will meet with his pastor to develop a Ministry Plan that is to be documented within a Parish Agreement (Appendix 9). The Ministry Plan shall include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- a. Ministry assigned by the pastor, the expectations associated with the ministerial assignment, and the criterion used to evaluate his ministry
 - b. Actions to be taken to keep the expectations and responsibilities of his ministry, work, family, and prayer life in proportion and balance so his life is integrated in holiness rather than splintered in functionalism
 - c. The manner in which the deacon will meet his obligations for direct service to the Archbishop and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta at-large
 - d. Ways he will serve the poor, oppressed, sick, bereaved and other needy at the parish and extra-parochial environs. Each of these four (or more) elements shall include a goal, planned activities, and means of evaluation.
3. Post-Ordination Formation Plan

The on-going formation plan shall include attendance at the Annual Retreat, Convocation of Deacons, and the special workshops planned for the newly ordained on homiletics, liturgy, and spiritual life of the deacon, which are scheduled through the Office of the Diaconate. (Appendix 7)

Section 7. Length of Assignment

The term of assignment for the standard parish assignment remains in effect at the pleasure of the Archbishop. The typical term of assignment for special, or Extra-Parochial Assignments, is for a period of three (3) years, renewable for an additional term or terms with consultation among the deacon, his pastor/ministerial supervisor, and the Director of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate.

Section 8. Changes In/Review of Assignment

1. Transfers Between Parishes

- a. A deacon seeking a transfer within the Diocese will make his desire known by personally writing the Director of Deacon Personnel.
- b. The Director of Deacon Personnel will consult with pastors/supervisors and the Deacon Personnel Board for potential assignment locations prior to making any assignment recommendations to the Bishop.
- c. The Director of the Permanent Diaconate will consult with pastors/supervisors at potential assignment locations prior to making any assignment recommendations to the Bishop.
- d. Although deacons serve at the pleasure of the Archbishop, it is prudent to periodically conduct placement reviews of an assignment of long duration. At the discretion of the Director of Deacon Personnel, and with the approval of the Archbishop, the length of any deacon's assignment may be reviewed.

2. Transfers Outside of the Archdiocese

A deacon wanting to transfer to/from the Archdiocese must have the permission of the Archbishop of Atlanta. (See Section 12. for Policy on Incardination/Excardination)

Section 9. Ministry Evaluation

- a. Prior to ordination all candidates will meet with their Pastor and complete a Parish Agreement (Appendix 8). Completed forms must be signed by both Pastor and candidate. Completed forms will be kept on file in the Office of the Permanent Diaconate.
- b. Every three (3) years, or whenever there is a change in assignment or a new pastor is assigned to the parish where the deacon is assigned, the deacon will complete an updated Parish Agreement with their pastor. Completed forms will be kept on file in the Office of the Permanent Diaconate.
- c. Every three (3) years the Office of the Permanent Diaconate will request an updated Parish Agreement from all deacons not affected in Section 9. a or Section 9. b.

Section 10. Leaves of Absence

All requests for leaves of absence must be made in writing to the Archbishop. Likewise, the Archbishop will communicate his decision in writing.

1. Temporary Leaves of Absence

A Temporary Leave of Absence may be granted to a deacon by the Director of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate when formally requested in writing. After a personal meeting with the Director, a leave may be granted by the Archbishop for reasons of health of the deacon, his spouse or any other immediate family member or dependent, studies, personal problems, family commitments, change of occupation or parish situation, or temporary dislocation from the Archdiocese.

A Temporary Leave of Absence will be granted for a designated period, agreed upon by the Director of the Office of the Diaconate. The leave will be reviewed upon termination of the

set period, and may be extended one time if both parties deem this necessary and/or suitable. A deacon may request return to active ministry before the expiration date agreed upon.

A deacon on Temporary Leave of Absence is considered to be in "good standing" within the Diocese. He is encouraged to participate in all activities of the diaconal community. (social, spiritual, educational).

A deacon on Temporary Leave of Absence does not exercise the faculties granted by the Archbishop to all active deacons. He is not to identify himself by the title "Deacon", nor is he to wear clerical attire.

2. Administrative Leaves of Absence

A deacon may be placed on Administrative Leave of Absence in accordance with canon law, at the direction of the Archbishop, or his designee.

A deacon who is placed on Administrative Leave of Absence is relieved of all responsibility for any ecclesiastical office or function. An Administrative Leave of Absence may be for an unlimited period of time, with return to ministry dependent on the Archbishop's approval of the deacon's request, his suitability for ministry, and the availability of an assignment.

The deacon will be notified by the Archbishop and/or the Director of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate as to whether his faculties will be revoked, pending resolution of the reason(s) for the administrative leave.

Section II. Sabbaticals

1. Overview

A sabbatical offers a deacon the opportunity to be renewed through a less demanding schedule, a change of pace, and freedom from the duties and stress of ministry, marriage renewal, and related concerns. It is also intended to be a time of growth in such dimensions as theological knowledge, human understandings, spiritual formation, and pastoral skills. A sabbatical is an extended period of time away from a deacon's assignment granted by the Archbishop for such purposes as respite, personal growth, advancing one's pastoral skills, and spiritual renewal. Recognizing that deacons ordinarily hold civilian occupations, it is not unusual for a deacon to request a sabbatical during which he continues to reside in the Diocese for some or his entire sabbatical.

All incardinated deacons who have served six (6) years in the Archdiocese of Atlanta are eligible to apply for a sabbatical.

A sabbatical shall ordinarily be for a period of time between three (3) months to one (1) year. It is expected that the deacon will include spiritual formation during the sabbatical term, including at least one (1) retreat of at least three (3) days.

The Sabbatical Policy recognizes the importance of periodic renewal, affirms the deacon's contributions, and makes clear the procedures of applying and being granted a sabbatical. The Policy is intended to encourage deacons to update and refresh themselves personally and spiritually. The Archdiocese of Atlanta considers this so essential that the Archbishop and the Director of the Permanent Diaconate may request that a deacon take a sabbatical even when the deacon in question may not see a need to do so.

There is no automatic financial support for a deacon's sabbatical leave as most sabbaticals are unfunded. However, at the time of the sabbatical application, the deacon may request a grant from the Office of the Diaconate. If the deacon's service has been continuous in a specific parish/agency, and if the deacon plans to return to ministry in that parish/agency, it may be appropriate to request financial support from that parish/agency.

During a sabbatical, the deacon retains his ministerial faculties. Should he remain in the Diocese during all or some parts of his sabbatical, he is authorized to assist at Holy Mass and otherwise exercise his faculties with the consent of his pastor/supervisor.

If the deacon will be residing outside the Diocese for all or a significant amount of the sabbatical, he will provide the Director of Deacon Personnel, in advance, his temporary address and other contact information.

Although welcome to attend, the deacon is released for attendance requirements at diaconal events during his sabbatical.

The deacon will ordinarily return to his previous assignment at the completion of his sabbatical. The deacon may be asked to make to the Office of the Permanent Diaconate an oral or written report on his sabbatical, especially if it involved formal studies.

2. Procedures

a. Application and Implementation

b. The deacon requesting a leave or sabbatical shall consult with the Director of Deacon Personnel. The purpose of this consultation is to exchange information and to explore options.

c. The deacon will write a letter to the Archbishop requesting a leave or sabbatical leave which shall ordinarily include the purpose of the leave, the amount of time requested, the specific dates, explanation of absence from the Archdiocese, seniority (length of time in Diocese), any arrangement necessary to cover his parish duties during his absence, retreat plans, and in the case of a sabbatical, whether he intends to return to the parish to which he is presently assigned. An application form will be used as a cover letter with the communication to the Archbishop.

d. The deacon's pastor shall provide a letter of recommendation to the Archbishop. The Archbishop will notify the deacon and his pastor of his decision.

e. Return to Ministry

Prior to 30 days before the end of his sabbatical, the deacon will:

- Write a letter to the Archbishop asking to return to his pastoral duties. The Archbishop will respond to his request and notify the deacon's pastor/supervisor.
- Contact the Director of Deacon Personnel. If there has been a change of pastors or some other major change in the organization/administration of the parish, the Director of Deacon Personnel, the pastor, and the deacon shall confer before the deacon resumes his duties.
- In the case of granted leaves of absence, it is ordinarily the policy of the Archdiocese of Atlanta that clerics are not returned to their previous assignment.

Section 12. Incardination and Excardination

Special issues arise for deacons who have secular employment that may lead to their transfer outside the Diocese. The USCCB guidelines for incardination/excardination will be followed. (See *Protocol for the Incardination/Excardination of Deacons* in Appendix 5).

Even though he has moved, the deacon remains incardinated in his diocese of first incardination unless a formal or *ipso iure* process of excardination and incardination has been followed. The Archdiocese of Atlanta does not automatically incardinate any cleric. A specific process has been established for those who wish to be considered for incardination. More information regarding this process may be obtained from the Office of the Permanent Diaconate. It is important for dioceses to maintain accurate records of the location of their deacons, even though outside their diocese, and for deacons to maintain communication with the diocese of their incardination.

Deacons are bound by the obligations and enjoy the rights that come with incardination, the same as all clergy. They are exempted from some of the obligations (cf. *Canon, 288*), but they are obliged to reverence and obey their ordinary of incardination (*Canon, 273*), to accept a duty entrusted to them by their ordinary unless excused by a legitimate impediment (*Canon, 274, §2*), not to be absent from their diocese of incardination for a notable period of time without at least the presumed permission of their ordinary (*Canon, 283, §1*), etc.

Section 13. Continuing Education

1. Introduction

Because continuing education is part of the ongoing formation of the deacon, consideration should be given to the general path of the process. Specifically, in the first five (5) years after Holy Ordination, the focus should be on deepening the deacon's understanding and skills involved in the basic ministries of Word, liturgy, and charity. (*National Directory, 251-252*) In succeeding years, the deacon should approach a more in-depth study of all the components of diaconal ministry (*National Directory, 251*) and this should be a part of a broader focus on mission. (*National Directory, 252*)

2. Notification and reporting Procedures

- a. In their final year of formation, each candidate will receive during the pre-ordination retreat a copy of this Continuing Education Policy and a copy of a *Continuing Education Reporting Form*.
- b. Each year, in January, deacons will submit to the Office of the Permanent Diaconate their Continuing Education Reporting Form for the preceding calendar year. Their Continuing Education Records will be reviewed and any discrepancies later communicated back to the respective deacon.
- c. Each deacon should make a copy of his own Continuing Education Reporting Form before submission to the Director of the Diaconate. The submitted Continuing Education Form will become part of the deacon's records.
- d. The deacon will have access to his Continuing Education File upon verbal request. The staff of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate will have access to the file only in the performance of their official functions. The file shall be duplicated and released only to the deacon upon written request, the copies of which will be for his use, (e.g., for review by a current or prospective pastor or supervisor, etc).

- e. Waiver of minimum credit or extension of time to complete the education may be granted only by the Director of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate and then, only in exceptional cases. Such waiver will be considered only upon receipt of a written request by the deacon. Waiver may be considered for, but not limited to, age, health, employment, family or ministry demands. Waivers or granting extensions will be announced to the respective deacon in writing. A failure to submit the Continuing Education Reporting Form shall be referred to the Director for his action.

Section 14. Spiritual Life

1. Introduction

Sacred Scripture constantly teaches that we who are baptized have “*put on the Lord Jesus Christ*”. (Rom. 13:14; Gal. 3:27) We are to have His mind, His heart and His spirit in prayer and action.

The Second Vatican Council called all Catholics to holiness and, in particular, called bishops, priests, and deacons to set the example for all the faithful. “The deacons, who, waiting upon the mysteries of Christ and of the Church, should keep themselves free from every vice, should praise God, and give a good example to all in everything. (1 Tim. 3:8-10) Clerics, called by the Lord and set aside as His portion, and preparing themselves for the ministerial duties under the watchful eyes of shepherds, are bound to conform their minds and hearts to such high calling, persevering in prayer, fervent in love, thinking about whatever is true, just, and of good repute, doing everything for the glory and honor of God”. (LG, Chapter V, #41)

The 1983 Code of Canon Law is especially directive: “Clerics have a special obligation to seek holiness in their lives, because they are consecrated to God by a new title through reception of Orders and are stewards of the mysteries of God in the service of His people”. (Canon, 276, §1)

In *Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem*, Pope Paul VI refers to the First Letter of Paul to Timothy when speaking of the call to the diaconate and summarizes it by stating: “Let the deacons...endeavor to be always pleasing to God, ready for every good work.” By reason, therefore, of the Order received, they must surpass by far all the others in the practice of the liturgical life, in the love of prayer, in...service, obedience, charity, and chastity.

2. Obligations

In keeping with Canon Law and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) directive, the deacon is obliged to recite daily at least *Laudes* (Morning Prayer) and *Vespers* (Evening Prayer) of the *Divine Office*.

The deacon will devote himself to daily reading and meditating on the Word of God and frequently receive the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist and the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

The deacon is to take part in an annual canonical retreat offered by or approved by the Office of the Diaconate. (Canon, 276, §4)

The deacon is expected to seek out and regularly meet with a Bishop-approved spiritual director, who can assist the deacon in his desire to grow spiritually in a whole and healthy manner. At least annually, the deacon should share the joys, concerns, efforts, and fruits of

his journey in faith with a priest or deacon giving direction and encouragement in the spiritual life.

As an aid to the deacon, the Office of the Permanent Diaconate will establish ways and means to assist the deacon in fulfillment of this Policy and, when appropriate, in monitoring its success.

Section 15. Married Deacons

I. Introduction

In the same way that deacons are expected to live a life in accordance with his sacramental vows of Holy Orders, the married deacon is also expected to live a life in accordance with his sacramental vows of Holy Matrimony.

Married deacons (and their spouses) are not immune to the stresses, problems, and temptations that affect other married couples. Yet, by the very nature of the deacon's Holy Ordination, he assumes a very public role and is expected to witness in a special way the meaning of Christian marriage to those whom he serves in the larger family of the parish, Diocese, and Universal Church. While his gifts, talents, and generosity can be a source of inspiration, his problems, mistakes, and judgments can also be a source of scandal and embarrassment for the Holy Catholic Church.

Because of the delicate balance between the Sacraments of Holy Orders and Holy Matrimony and between public ministry and private life, there is the need of this policy for those deacons that might be facing marriage difficulties or possible separation or civil divorce. Guidelines generalize, however, and every case is different. Consequently, each married deacon and his wife and family members will be treated with careful dignity and uniqueness. This Policy is an attempt to balance the compassion and gentleness of Jesus the Christ with the needs and good name of the Holy Catholic Church whom deacons serve.

2. Marriages Experiencing Difficulties

Stable, enduring marriages are important to the mission of the diaconate. The diaconate community stands ready in every way practical to assist those who are experiencing marital difficulty.

When a married deacon/spouse begins to sense that their marriage is experiencing difficulties such that routine responsibilities to ministry, family, or occupation are affected, the following applies:

- The Director of the Permanent Diaconate will appoint a deacon as chaplain to serve as first point of contact for those seeking assistance.
- The deacon/spouse is expected to contact the chaplain as soon as possible for assistance and/or guidance. Where it is appropriate, the chaplain may refer the deacon/spouse to more advanced professional counseling.
- All discussions with the chaplain/counselor will be treated confidentially. If, however, it becomes evident that the marriage difficulties could have serious repercussions on the parish/agency where the deacon is assigned, the Diocese, or the Universal Church, the deacon and the chaplain/counselor will contact the Director of the Deacon Personnel.

- When the pastor/supervisor of the parish/agency where the deacon is assigned becomes aware of marriage difficulties, he/she is to notify the Director of Deacon Personnel. The Director will promptly initiate discussion with the individual deacon.
- If a situation threatening the parish/agency, Diocese, or the Universal Church cannot be resolved in a reasonable amount of time, the Director of the Permanent Diaconate may recommend to the Archbishop a course of action that will allow the married deacon and his spouse to focus exclusively on the resolution of this problem. This may result in an Administrative Leave of Absence, curtailment of major ministerial activities.
- During such a leave or curtailment of ministry, the deacon will provide the Director of the Permanent Diaconate with periodic updates as to the status of his situation.
- Should the situation deteriorate to the point of actual scandal or embarrassment to the parish/agency, Diocese, or Universal Church or if causal responsibility on the part of the deacon for the marital difficulties is judged to be severely grave (due to abuse, infidelity, criminality, pathology, etc.), the Director of the Permanent Diaconate will confer with the Archbishop to determine appropriate action.

3. Separation or Civil Divorce

If a marital separation or civil divorce occurs, the following policies apply:

- The deacon will make the Director of the Permanent Diaconate and the deacon's pastor/supervisor aware of any changes in marital status as soon as possible, but not more than five (5) days from the status change.
- The Director of the Permanent Diaconate will meet with the deacon and his pastor/supervisor to determine to what extent the deacon should continue in active ministry.
- Resources for counseling will be made available for the deacon, his spouse, and/or their children.
- Ordinarily, deacons involved in civil divorce actions will be required to take a two (2) year Administrative Leave of Absence.
- Should the deacon, after consultation with the Director of the Permanent Diaconate and approval by the Archbishop, return to ministry, he may be reassigned to a different parish/agency.

The deacon will fulfill all paternal and financial responsibilities as required by the civil courts.

4. Remarriage

Canon 1087 expressly prohibits one in Holy Orders from contracting marriage. Therefore, it is the norm and the understanding of all married deacons that should their wife proceed them in death, or if a divorce takes place, the deacon cannot remarry.

In 1997, through a circular letter from the Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (N.263/97, dated 6 June 1997, n.8), provisions were made by which certain extremely rare exceptions might be made by which a widowed deacon might be permitted to remarry and continue in active ministry. The decision on this exemption is reserved solely to the Holy See. (Refer to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the

Discipline of Sacraments for additional information.) In 2005, the provisions for exception were modified to make it more difficult to obtain special permissions to remarry.

Any deacon entering into a marriage, without permission of the Holy See is automatically suspended from the exercise of ministry at the time of the marriage and may be dismissed from the clerical state as a penalty. (CCI394.1)

Section 16. Deacon Remuneration

For general information concerning remuneration, refer to the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States*. For the Archdiocese of Atlanta, the following specific policies apply:

- a. A deacon may not charge for any service he is empowered to provide by virtue of his Holy Ordination or which adheres to him as a privilege of his pastoral assignment by the Archbishop of Atlanta. More specifically, a deacon may not charge a fee or demand fiscal compensation or ask for a gift for any Holy Sacrament, sacramental, or diaconal service. In particular, he may not stipulate that such a gift or fee is required as a condition of, preparation for, or reception of, a Holy Sacrament, for a sacramental, for service as a prayer leader, or for assisting at a liturgy.
- b. Although it is strongly discouraged, a deacon may accept a cash gift freely given in appreciation, from parishioners at Christmas, for Holy Baptisms, home blessings, funeral vigils, marriages and so forth. Such a gift is often termed an honorarium, stipend or stole fee. However, he must make it clear to the person offering the gift that it is not mandatory. Also, this gift from the parishioner must clearly be intended personally for the deacon (e.g. check written to the deacon, cash in a thank you card addressed to the deacon, the parishioner states this is for the deacon personally), which is beyond any established fees or usual stipend intended for the parish. In case of doubt, the deacon is to follow the guidelines of his pastor.
- c. Permanent Deacons are to take care of their own and their family's needs using income derived from their full-time employment by the diocese, parish or secular profession. In an individual situation of need, the diocesan Church ought to assist the deacon and his family in charity. (ND #94)
- d. Permanent Deacons in full-time employment by the diocese, parish or agency are to receive remuneration commensurate with the salaries and benefits provided to the lay men and women on staff for that particular occupation. (ND #96.1)
- e. "Deacons in full-time secular employment, as well as those in part-time ministries, are to be reimbursed for legitimate expenses incurred in their ministry."
- f. A deacon should be reimbursed for his direct and indirect expenses, such as mileage, cost of worship aids, and meals. (ND #96-2)

Section 17. Permanent Diaconate Communications

I. Introduction

The Office of the Permanent Diaconate maintains an e-mail list and postal mail database; the latter can generate mailing labels to communicate with the deacons and deacon candidates of the Archdiocese of Atlanta. This postal database and e-mail list have a very limited use, and are not for public use. The purpose of them is to:

- Notify the diaconal community when one of our members is ill;
- Notify the diaconal community when one of our members has died;
- Notify the diaconal community when one of our members is in need of prayers;
- Notify the diaconal community of up-coming liturgies, continuing education, formation, and other calendar items;
- Distribute newsletters, flyers, letters, conference announcements, and other official communications from and/or sanctioned by the Archdiocese of Atlanta;
- Request volunteers to assist at diocesan liturgies and events. (e.g. Chrism Mass, Rite of Election, Archbishop's Convocation, Couples Retreat, Eucharistic Congress);
- Notify the diaconal community of other news items and announcements related to ministry. Here are some example notifications for which the e-mail list has been used in the past: *change of address/phone, transfers, new appointments of clergy, a parish fire, and official communications from the chancery.* Items in this category clearly identify the chancery as the sender.

2. Prohibited Uses of Email Addresses

The Office of the Permanent Diaconate may not use this e-mail list to broadcast personal position papers, solicitations of any type, apologetics, political purposes, or for lobbying activities. It is not used to broadcast poetry, jokes, recipes, articles, etc.

3. Mailings and Non-Electronic Communication

The Office of the Permanent Diaconate maintains a database of current addresses and phone numbers for all deacons. The database mailing list is capable of generating a set of mailing labels addressed to the diaconate community of Atlanta. These labels are used for mailings from the Office of the Permanent Diaconate and for other mailings from the Catholic Center such as from the Office of the Archbishop, Office of Vicars General, and Office of Divine Worship and others with approval of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate. Sets of labels are restricted in the same manner as the e-mail list and are therefore, not for individual use.

4. Special Requests for E-mail and/or Use Of Mailing Labels:

Requests for use of the mailing labels should be submitted to the Director of the Permanent Diaconate or Associate Director of Formation. The Archdiocesan Office of Communications may be consulted by the Office of the Permanent Diaconate for advice on any use of the e-mail and database labels.

5. Authorized Users Only:

The Office of the Permanent Diaconate will not release to any individual or agency unless authorized by the Director or Associate Director. Deacons are instructed not to copy the e-mail addresses of other deacons from e-mail messages they receive from the Office of the Diaconate. Furthermore, it is a common courtesy for individuals broadcasting e-mail of any type from their personal address book to obtain the permission of the recipients before placing them on their private list.

6. Unwanted Broadcast E-Mail:

It should be pointed out that senders may obtain a deacon's e-mail address or home address from a source other than through the official release of the list from the Office of the Diaconate. Therefore, any deacon receiving unwanted broadcast or other e-mail should notify the sender.

Section 18. Complaints Against Deacons

1. Guidelines

From time to time complaints about deacons will be brought forward. The following are guidelines that will be used for complaint management and are based on fundamental values and principles including these:

- a. Respect for the human person and everyone's right to a good name and reputation (*Canon 220*)
- b. The common good of the Catholic Church and her faithful
- c. The rights of the deacon as an ordained Catholic cleric to receive objective information, particularly regarding personnel policies and procedures of the Church as they affect him
- d. The right of persons employed by, or engaged in the services of the Church, to working conditions consonant with human dignity, as well as their right to professional practices comparable to those in society at large (*Canon 1286*)
- e. The well-founded possibility of facilitating reconciliation (*Canons 1713-1716*)
- f. The right to due process for all parties.

2. Complaint Management

Every non-anonymous complaint against a deacon will be investigated. The procedure followed will be dependent upon the situation.

The manner in which complaints are handled will always convey to the deacon involved his clerical rights and that no judgment is made concerning the validity of the complaints until the deacon's side is heard.

Complaints submitted to the Chancery or to the Director for Deacon Personnel are received for one primary reason: to effect a change for the better on the part of the deacon and/or the Catholic Church community and to maintain a safe and professional environment for all.

Complaints are accepted ordinarily only if the complaints were taken to the person(s) involved without success.

3. Obedience and Respect to the Ordinary

The deacon promises obedience and respect to the Archbishop and his successors at Holy Ordination. He is expected to demonstrate fidelity and respect to his pastor or other ministerial supervisor appointed by the Archbishop, and to comply with their directives. Failure to show proper respect and obedience will lead to disciplinary processes.

Deacons agree to fulfill the obligations and carry out the duties specified in the *Letter of Assignment* as issued by the Archbishop. Failure to fulfill these obligations or carry out these duties will lead to disciplinary processes.

Deacons who fail to comply with the formal directives given by the Archbishop or his designee (e.g. Chancellor, Moderator of the Curia, Director of Deacon Personnel) regarding the *Letter of Appointment*, ministry, or life style are subject to disciplinary action according to diocesan policies and procedures and in keeping with Canon Law.

A deacon may be removed from his pastoral assignment and/or deprived of the faculties to minister in the Diocese by the Archbishop of Atlanta until the circumstances which provoke the removal of the faculties are cleared. The circumstances which may provoke removal of faculties include but are not limited to:

- Not to enter into an assignment or abide by the *Letter of Appointment* without the consent of the Director of the Office of the Diaconate; or
- Not to abide by the policies and directives established and promulgated by the Archbishop of Atlanta, and has been notified three (3) times in writing of non-compliance by the Director of the Diaconate, or other competent authority; (e.g. Chancellor, Moderator of the Curia, Director of Deacon Personnel);
- Not to follow the formal directives of the Archbishop of Atlanta, or his designee (e.g. Chancellor, Moderator of the Curia, Director of Deacon Personnel);
- To live a lifestyle not in keeping with that of an ordained Catholic cleric or otherwise detrimental to the good name and reputation of the diaconate community and the Church

4. Allegations of Sexual Misconduct with a Minor

This Policy and Procedure Directory does not address allegations of sexual misconduct with a minor. Such matters are subject to an entirely separate process under the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta Policy on Sexual Misconduct by Diocesan Personnel. Such matters are to be immediately reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency with notification to the Office of Child and Youth Protection of the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

5. Allegations of Inappropriate and/or Unprofessional Behavior

Allegations of criminal sexual misconduct are reported to the appropriate law enforcement. Inappropriate, but non-criminal sexual misbehavior, are reported to the Director of the Office of the Diaconate, Vicar General, Moderator of the Curia, or his delegate.

6. Complaints about Applicants, Aspirants or Candidates

The Associate Director of Formation handles and responds to complaints and concerns about deacon applicants, aspirants and/or candidates. Otherwise, the process of complaint management follows the process in place for ordained deacons except that the Director of the Diaconate/Deacon Personnel is the review officer of the first instance.

7. Role of the Pastor or Agency Supervisor

The pastor or agency head is the supervisor of the day-to-day ministry of the deacon. Complaints about a deacon in the parish or agency (e.g. hospital) are referred to the pastor/supervisor for resolution.

Complaints about a deacon, which come to the Director of the Permanent Diaconate but are properly the responsibility of the pastor, shall be referred to the pastor/supervisor.

Complaints about a deacon, which come to the pastor or agency head but are properly the responsibility of the Director of Deacon Personnel, shall be referred to the Director of Deacon Personnel.

The pastor/administrator shares in the supervision of his parish deacons with the Director of Deacon Personnel. There will be instances in which a complaint about a deacon overlaps parish and diocesan vantage points. Therefore, it is necessary that the pastor/agency head and the Director of the Permanent Diaconate maintain effective communications concerning serious complaints about deacons. Both parties have the responsibility to inform the other regarding serious complaints and significant allegations, and where appropriate to collaborate in the resolution of the complaint.

In circumstances in which there is a conflict regarding the resolution of an issue, either the pastor or the deacon may ask for the assistance of the Director of Deacon Personnel. The Director will attempt to mediate the process of conflict resolution or otherwise facilitate a satisfactory effect.

8. Complaint Procedures

- a. The nature of the complaint will determine the process utilized in addressing it. Regardless of the process used, every attempt will be made to handle the complaint at the lowest level possible.
- b. For complaints involving canonical crimes (delicts) and which may result in sanctions or punitive actions against the deacon, the deacon will be advised of his clerical rights to due canonical process, and the complaint handled according to that same due process. And as would be expected, the rights of the Holy Catholic Church and her faithful will also be protected.
- c. The Director of the Permanent Diaconate has responsibility for addressing complaints about deacons that are non-parochial. The deacon's supervising pastor or agency head has the first line responsibility for addressing complaints about a deacon that center primarily on parish ministry.
- d. Complaints received by the Archbishop and other professional staff are ordinarily forwarded to the Director for Deacon Personnel. The pastor (or agency head) as the deacon's parish supervisor may register a complaint about a deacon with the Director of the Permanent Diaconate seeking guidance and/or relief. The Director of the Permanent

Diaconate keeps the Vicar for Clergy and the Archbishop informed about how the complaint is being handled or how it will be resolved.

- e. The Director may apply the following methods to resolve these issues:
 - Face-to-face meetings
 - Written communication with the principals
 - Preparing documents and draft letters for the Archbishop's consideration, or
 - Some other manner
- f. The Director of the Permanent Diaconate is made aware of the complaint lodged against the deacon, and the deacon involved is informed that the Director has been told or the Director may make the deacon aware of the complaint.
- g. The Director of the Permanent Diaconate follows up on a complaint only when it involves diaconal ministry, a performance or behavioral problem or the deacon's physical, emotional, or psychological health. Matters related to the spiritual life of the deacon are referred to the spiritual director of deacons.
- h. The Director of the Permanent Diaconate in the process of considering the complaint will ordinarily meet with the deacon, confer with the complainant, review the deacon's file, interview those likely to have knowledge about the behavior alleged in the complaint, and otherwise gather testimony and facts which might have a bearing on the resolution of the complaint. In most instances, the complaint is resolved through the Office of the Director of Deacon Personnel.
- i. Credible and serious complaints of a second/third hand nature that make reference to someone with firsthand knowledge may be followed up. The person of the second/third hand may be asked to:
 - Name the person with firsthand knowledge, if this is appropriate
 - Obtain that person's permission to be contacted by the Director of the Permanent Diaconate or other official
 - Ask that person to come forward in person
 - Ask that person to submit written/signed testimony
 - Rumors and unsubstantiated second/third hand complaints may be made known to the deacon, but will be dropped unless or until someone with first hand knowledge steps forward
- j. Requests by the complainant for a meeting:
 - The deacon involved is informed of the meeting either beforehand or immediately afterward.
 - Even if the complainant requests a meeting with the Archbishop, the complainant will be advised to meet first with the Director of the Permanent Diaconate and/or the Vicar General.
 - The fact that a meeting is held does not imply any judgment on the validity of the complaint.
- k. In order to resolve a complaint, the Director of the Permanent Diaconate may:
 - Personally make an effort to resolve the complaint

- Seek the services of a mediator or emissary
 - Seek other means of resolution
- l. Disciplinary actions rest solely with the Archbishop of Atlanta.
- m. Complaints, which may involve the re-assignment of a deacon, the transfer of a deacon, or the removal of a deacon from ministry, may be referred to the Deacon Personnel Board.

Section 19. Removal of Ordained Clerical State

I. General

In accord with current canonical legislation and the praxis of this Congregation, the request of a deacon for the loss of the clerical state and a dispensation from all the obligations of Holy Ordination may be granted only "*ob graves causas*" (Can. 290, S. 3), whether for a transitional or permanent deacon, diocesan or religious. The petition must include the following documents:

An explicit request by the deacon, signed by his own hand and addressed to the Holy Father, giving a brief description of the reasons which led to the petition.

The "Curriculum Vitae" of the petitioner should include an explanation of: the seriousness of the reasons for the request, the development of events which led to the crisis, and where the responsibility for the same lies, i.e., either with the Deacon or due to external factors.

The "*votum*" of the bishop of incardination, Major Superior or Provincial concerning "*de rei veritate*" and the advisability of granting a return to the lay state and a dispensation from the obligations of Holy Orders.

The testimonies or depositions of Superiors, professors and colleagues from the time of formation and the period of diaconal ministry.

The acts from the diocesan and provincial archives regarding the period of formation and the scrutinies for his admission to Holy Orders (Can. 1051).

A complete judicial process is required for the dismissal of a deacon from the clerical state who will not ask for the same of his own volition (cf. Canon 1342 S 2). In this case, it is necessary to prove, not only a lack of fitness for ministry, but also that the deacon committed a crime for which the Code of Canon Law envisions a dismissal from the clerical state. The responsibility for conducting such a process, rests with the Archbishop. Following the judicial process, a request for a dispensation from celibacy can be submitted to this Congregation (Canon 291).¹

2. Procedures

- a. In accord with current canonical legislation and the praxis of this Congregation, the request of a deacon for the loss of the clerical state and a dispensation from all the obligations of Holy Ordination may be granted only "*ob graves causas*" (Can. 290, S. 3), whether for a transitional or permanent deacon, diocesan or religious. The petition must include the following documents:

¹ *Source: Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments*

- An explicit request by the Deacon for the favor, signed in his own hand and addressed to the Holy Father, giving a brief description of the reasons which led to the petition.
 - The "Curriculum Vitae" of the petitioner should include an explanation of: the seriousness of the reasons for the request, the development of events which led to the crisis, and where the responsibility for the same lies, i.e., either with the Deacon or due to external factors.
 - The "votum" of the bishop of incardination, Major Superior or Provincial concerning "de rei veritate" and the advisability of granting a return to the lay state and a dispensation from the obligations of Holy Orders.
 - The testimonies or depositions of Superiors, professors and colleagues from the time of formation and the period of diaconal ministry.
 - The acts from the diocesan and provincial archives regarding the period of formation and the scrutinies for his admission to Holy Orders (Can. 1051).
- b. A complete judicial process is required for the dismissal of a deacon from the clerical state who will not ask for the same of his own volition (cf. Canon 1342 S 2). In this case, it is necessary to prove, not only a lack of fitness for ministry, but also that the deacon committed a crime for which the Code of Canon Law envisions a dismissal from the clerical state.
 - c. The responsibility for conducting such a process rests with the diocesan bishop or religious superior.
 - d. Following the judicial process, a request for a dispensation from celibacy can be submitted to this Congregation (Canon 291).
 - e. *Source: Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments*

Section 20. Senior Deacons

I. Policy

At the age of 75 a Deacon in the Archdiocese of Atlanta will be designated as a Senior Deacon. The designation of a Deacon as a Senior Deacon is reserved to the Archbishop of Atlanta. No Deacon's pastor/supervisor may designate a Deacon as a Senior Deacon. The Archbishop of Atlanta may require that a deacon take Senior Deacon status at any age and for whatever reasons he deems justified. Any Deacon may request that the Archbishop designate him as a Senior Deacon regardless of the Deacon's age.

A Senior Deacon is relieved of his ministerial assignment. The Letter of Appointment and Parish Agreement entered into by the Deacon with his pastor and/or supervisor, will become void at that time.

Faculties for Senior Deacons will remain in place, unless revoked by the Archbishop. A Deacon's ministerial faculties may be exercised with the consent of the local pastor/supervisor where the faculties are to be exercised. On an annual basis pastors/supervisors will inform the Office of the Permanent Diaconate about the ministerial involvement of their Senior Deacons.

A Senior Deacon will continue to be informed of all diocesan activities within the diaconate community through the publications of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate and will be invited to continue their participation in the diaconate community retreats and social events.

A Senior Deacon, if currently incardinated in the Archdiocese of Atlanta, will continue to be incardinated in the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

A Senior Deacon and his spouse will not qualify to serve on the Deacon Council or Deacon Personnel Board. Nevertheless, he and/or his spouse could belong to the different committees or advisory committees of any Council or Board established by the Office of the Permanent Diaconate.

Deacons transferring into the Archdiocese of Atlanta who are age 75 and over will not be incardinated, receive canonical appointments, or be granted regular faculties. These Deacons shall be designated as Senior Deacons upon arrival in the Archdiocese.

If a Senior Deacon is employed by the Archdiocese or a parish, nothing in this Policy shall affect his employment, retirement benefits or any other aspect pertaining to his job or job function. This Senior Deacon Policy is addressed solely to a Deacon's canonical appointment, faculties and ministry.

2. Procedures

- a. Deacons may petition the Archbishop for a change in status to Senior Deacon at any time and at any age. If the Archbishop grants Senior Deacon status to a Deacon under the age of 75, the procedures below will apply, just as if he had attained age 75.
- b. Three months prior to turning 75 every Deacon must submit a letter to the Archbishop with a copy to the Director of the Diaconate indicating the date that he will turn age 75.
- c. The Archbishop will provide a written response to the Deacon with copies to the Director of the Diaconate and the Deacon's pastor/supervisor, acknowledging the date the Deacon will attain Senior Deacon status. The letter will also terminate the Deacon's canonical appointment and parish agreement on that date, which in most cases will be the Deacon's birthdate.
- d. A Deacon who has not attained the age of 75 but wishes to be designated a Senior Deacon may send his written request to the Archbishop. This request must be sent to the Director of the Permanent Diaconate, who will solicit input from the Deacon Personnel Board and then forward the request to the Archbishop along with the recommendation of the Deacon Personnel Board.
- e. A Deacon who transfers into the Archdiocese of Atlanta, who is age 75 or older and desires to conduct a baptism, witness a marriage or perform any other diaconal ministry requiring faculties, may request that the Archbishop grant him the necessary faculties for that one event. The request shall be made by contacting the Director of the Diaconate. Provided the Deacon is in good standing and current on his Safe Environment status the Director of the Diaconate shall forward the request to the Archbishop for consideration. There is no limit to the number of requests a deacon can make for these one-time faculties.

Section 21. Death of a Deacon

I. Introduction

Since the deacon is an ordained cleric of the Holy Catholic Church, procedures for the funeral of a deacon are necessarily different than those for the laity. The death of a deacon is a significant event, not only in the life of his family, but also in the community of deacons, the

Archdiocese, his parish, and the Universal Church. His life, by its very nature, assumes a public dimension, and both personal and community considerations must be made part of the planning of his funeral. It is the policy of the Archdiocese of Atlanta to give the highest priority to the wishes of the family of the deceased deacon within the boundaries set by liturgical norms. For those configured to Christ's ministry of diaconal service through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, the funeral rite demonstrates the respect and honor for the servant in the image of Christ.

This Policy attempts to provide guidance to the family and to the parish regarding the death and funeral of a deacon.

2. Funeral Planning

Deacons should candidly and faithfully share their ideas and desires with their immediate families regarding arrangements for their Catholic-Christian burial. To recognize death not as a tragic finality, but the proclamation of the fullness of life – this is our participation in the victory of Christ.

3. Death Notification

In the event of a deacon's death, a member of the family should notify the Director of Deacon Personnel, as well as the pastor of the parish the deacon was assigned to.

The Director of the Permanent Diaconate will ensure the Archbishop, Vicars General, and all members of the clergy of the Archdiocese are notified of the death of the deacon.

From the beginning, the Director of the Permanent Diaconate and the family of the deacon have the key role in planning for the funeral with the deacon's pastor. The role of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate and the diaconal community is to be one of prayer, support, and assistance.

The Office of the Permanent Diaconate is responsible for providing the Chancery Office with the pertinent details of the funeral for the deacon.

4. Funeral Rites

a. Vesting the Deceased Deacon

The deceased deacon is ordinarily vested in the (white) alb and deacon stole, along with a dalmatic (if the deacon owned one). The pastor and/or the Director of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate shall advise the family and funeral director of this tradition of the Church. (Secular clothes are not recommended but are allowable at the specific request of the family.)

b. The Vigil

The vigil (wake) service should be celebrated for a deceased deacon. It is recommended that this be conducted by other deacons from the parish or the surrounding area. The vigil service for a deacon is celebrated in the parish church unless custom or family preferences indicate otherwise. The Director of the Diaconate ordinarily participates in the vigil and briefly addresses the assembly in the name of the Diaconate community.

Rosary services are not appropriate for deacons, but this prayer may be said prior to or after the vigil service and may be done in a seamless manner. Deacons attending the vigil service should vest in white alb and white stole and are seated as a group in front pews. Deacon wives are provided with reserved space immediately behind the deacons.

c. The Funeral Mass

The deceased's pastor is ordinarily the presider and homilist at the Funeral Mass unless otherwise stated on the Funeral Planning Form or by family request. However, there are times when another priest or deacon might be more appropriate as the homilist, depending on his relationship to the deceased and in accord with the wishes of the family.

A Deacon of the Word and a Deacon of the Altar assist the presider. These deacons are typically deacons of the parish or are members of the deceased deacon's ordination class.

The Director of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate usually assists as a representative of the diaconate community, or he may be the Deacon of the Word or Deacon of the Altar as requested by the family.

d. Entrance Procession:

The Pascal Candle may be placed beforehand near the position where the coffin will occupy at the conclusion of the procession. The priest and assisting ministers precede the coffin and mourners in to the church. During the procession, a psalm, song, or responsorial is sung.

e. The Order of Procession will be:

- Thurifer
- Cross Bearer
- Candle Bearers
- Deacon of the Word (with book of the Gospels)
- Acolytes (if any instituted are present)
- Vested Deacons
- Priests
- Deacon of the Altar
- Presider
- Coffin
- Pall Bearers
- Family Mourners

f. Assisting Deacons' Responsibilities:

The Deacon of the Word reads the Intercessions. Deacons are used as ministers of the Precious Blood. The Deacon of the Altar takes the Body of Christ to the vested deacons. Deacons take the Precious Blood from the chalice on the altar. Music, liturgy, altar servers, choir, seating, etc is the responsibility of the pastor, who is asked to consult with the Director of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate before finalizing arrangements.

g. Sign of Farewell:

It is a tradition that deacons form an honor guard of farewell at the recessional that extends to the funeral hearse. The deacons (and priests) form two lines outside the

church door as the casket is carried between them. Two bowls of holy water are passed for the deacons and priests to sprinkle the body as it is brought to the hearse. The Deacon of the Altar ensures these are prepared beforehand.

h. The order of the recessional will be:

- Thurifer
- Cross Bearer
- Candle Bearers
- Acolytes (if any instituted present)
- Vested Deacons
- Priests
- Deacon of the Word
- Deacon of the Altar
- Presider
- Casket
- Pall Bearers
- Family Mourners

i. Cemetery Rites:

The pastor and/or a deacon is responsible for conducting the rites at the gravesite.

j. Post Burial

The Office of the Permanent Diaconate will provide a bereavement companion for the surviving spouse and offers ongoing community support.

The Office of the Permanent Diaconate will arrange for the Holy Mass offered for the deceased, through diaconal community offerings.

During the Convocation Mass, a communal liturgy shall be celebrated in memory of all deacons who have died since the renewal of the diaconate in the Archdiocese of Atlanta. The diaconal community is urged to pray for its deceased members.

Appendices

Appendix I - Diaconate Formation Advisory Board

1. Introduction

The Archbishop has established a Diaconate Formation Advisory Board to assist the Director of the Diaconate and the Archbishop in the administration of the Diaconate Program for the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

The Diaconate Formation Advisory Board may be charged with the responsibility of advising the Archbishop and/or the Director of the Diaconate on matters, the selection and formation of candidates to the diaconal formation, and any all other matters pertaining to the Permanent Diaconate Program of the archdiocese. Such matters could be evaluations of performance, leaves, conflict resolution, complaint management, and disciplinary action.

The Diaconate Formation Advisory Board is limited to an advisory role. There may be matters, which are referred to other entities or otherwise not referred to the Diaconate Formation Advisory Board. Routine deacon personnel matters are ordinarily assigned to the Director of Deacon Personnel. All personnel decisions regarding deacons rest solely with the ordinary.

2. Confidentiality

The deliberations of the Diaconate Formation Advisory Board are confidential. (Canon 220) The recommendations of the board regarding any actions are private matters between the board, The Director of the Office of the Diaconate and the Archbishop. Only the Archbishop or his designee may notify the parties regarding personnel decisions reached by the ordinary. No public or other announcement of a board recommendation or decision by the ordinary may be made without the expressed authorization of the Archbishop in a time and manner he prescribes.

3. Organization

- a. Chair: The Archbishop, or his designee.
- b. Recorder: he Office of the Permanent Diaconate shall provide a staff member to serve as the recorder and secretary to the Board.
- c. Membership: In addition to the Archbishop and the Director of the Permanent Diaconate, the Associate Directors of Formation and Spirituality shall be standing members. There shall be additional board members. including priests, deacons, religious and lay members who shall be appointed by the Archbishop for a term of three years or less, which terms may be extended or renewed. At least one member shall be a full member of the deacon council who shall make a report to the Council on an annual basis. Members serve at the pleasure of the ordinary.
- d. Committees: The chair may establish standing committees or ad hoc committees to assist the Diaconate Formation Advisory Board with the fulfillment of its duties. (e.g. Curriculum, Admissions and Scrutiny) By virtue of a particular need and due to their expertise or other good reason, the chair may appoint members to these committees who are not members of the Deacon Formation Advisory Board. The duties and duration

of such committees shall be documented in the minutes of the board or in some other appropriate written fashion.

4. Meetings

- a. Number and Dates of Meetings:
- b. The Diaconate Formation Advisory Board shall meet as needed to carry out their duties but no fewer than two times a year. The locations, dates, times and notifications of board meetings shall be determined by the chair or his designee. Teleconferences and other forms of meetings and communication may be utilized.
- c. Agendas – The agenda for meetings shall be prepared by the Associate Co-Directors of Diaconate Formation in consultation with the board members in a manner approved by the Archbishop or his designated chair.
- d. Recommendations – Ordinarily the recommendations of the Board shall be formed by consensus. However, the chair may call for a vote, either by a voice or by secret ballot or in some other manner of his choice.
- e. Records, Reports, and Correspondence – The minutes of the meetings, correspondence, and reports shall be prepared and maintained by the Office of the Permanent Diaconate in a manner prescribed by the Director of the Permanent Diaconate. The Office of the Permanent Diaconate shall maintain all appropriate records.
- f. Communication – The Board should maintain appropriate links to other diocesan entities to ensure a collaborative and integrative approach to the understanding and use of deacons and diaconal ministry throughout the Archdiocese.

5. Modifications or Dissolution

The Diaconate Formation Advisory Board may be modified or the Board dissolved by the Archbishop of Atlanta at any time.

Appendix 2 - Deacon Council

I. Deacon Council Constitution and Bylaws

COUNCIL OF DEACONS ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

PREAMBLE

The restored Order of Deacons in the Archdiocese of Atlanta joins in ministry with the Archbishop and his Presbyterate through a diakonia of liturgy, word, and charity¹. As living icons of Christ the Servant², deacons are united to one another in a sacramental fraternity and are called to maintain their communion of service³. To foster this diaconal communion, The Council of Deacons has been established as a strictly advisory board to serve as a means of communication between deacons and their Archbishop, between the Diaconate and the Presbyterate, and among the deacons themselves. The Council of Deacons will serve as a channel for all spiritual, educational and administrative matters held to be important by the diaconal community. So too, this Council of Deacons will serve those in formation, who hope to join in a diakonia of love.

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this organization is The Council of Deacons of the Archdiocese of Atlanta, and serves at the discretion of the Archbishop.

ARTICLE II. ACCOUNTABILITY

The Council shall be accountable to the Archbishop, his appointed representative and to the deacons it represents.

When the office of Archbishop is vacant, this Council shall cease until another Archbishop is installed and has given his approval for the Council's existence.²

ARTICLE III. DEFINITIONS

The following are the definitions used throughout this document:

Active

Active deacons are all deacons assigned by the Archbishop to active ministry within the Archdiocese of Atlanta. Active deacons either have full or partial faculties as granted by the Archbishop.

Christus Dominus 15, Catechism of the Catholic Church 1570, Catechism of the Catholic Church 1588
Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons #11
Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons #6
code of Canon Law 501§2 (for priests)

Council

Council is the name used throughout this document for The Council of Deacons of the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

Diaconate Community

All deacons living and/or incardinated in the Archdiocese of Atlanta who are Active, Retired, and Inactive and their families are considered members of the diaconate community. Active deacons are members of the Region in which they serve. Retired and Inactive deacons are considered members of the Region in which they live.

Director of Deacon Personnel

The Director of Deacon Personnel is responsible for the implementation of post-ordination services and is a non-voting member of the Council. The duties of the Director of Deacon Personnel are set forth in the Permanent Diaconate Directory of Policy and Procedures.

Associate Director of Deacon Formation

The Associate Director of Deacon Formation oversees the implementation of the dimensions and perspectives in formation prior to ordination — human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral and is a non-voting member of the Council. The duties of the Associate Director of Deacon Formation are set forth in the Permanent Diaconate Directory of Policy and Procedures.

Directors

This term is used in this document to refer to the Directors appointed by the Archbishop to serve the Diaconate Community, such as the Associate Director of Deacon Formation and the Director of Deacon Personnel.

Episcopal Delegate

The priest assigned by the Archbishop as his delegate to the Council of Deacons.

Inactive

Inactive deacons are all deacons living within the Archdiocese of Atlanta but have no pastoral assignment or are on a leave of absence. Inactive deacons do not have faculties granted to them.

Incardinated but serving outside Archdiocese

All deacons serving outside the Archdiocese but incardinated within this Archdiocese are considered as inactive in describing representation on the Council.

Presider

The Archbishop of Atlanta is the Presider for the Council.

Region

Regions are the geographic regions defining the representation for this Council. Definition of the Regions is included in Appendix A of this document.

Retired

Retired deacons are all deacons who have been granted retired status by their diocesan bishop. Retired deacons may maintain some or all of their faculties as directed by the Archbishop.

ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. COMPOSITION

The Council will be composed of one (1) member from each of the Regions. Members of the Council will be elected to three (3) year terms with no maximum number of terms.

Active or retired deacons will be eligible to vote for Council members within their region.

Section 2. ELECTION

The nomination of the candidates to be Council members shall be made during the months of September and October. After all nominees have accepted the nomination and their acceptance verified by the Director of Deacon Personnel or the Council Chairman or his delegate (for the Years of Ordination representative), the candidates' names will be placed on the ballots.

In December, ballots for those nominated will be sent by the Diaconate Office to each deacon, as applicable, for election of the appropriate representatives. The ballots returned and received by December 31 will be counted by the Episcopal Delegate and by the Director of Deacon Personnel.

Notice of the election results will be made to the council chairman or his delegate who in turn will notify the diaconal community.

A representative shall serve from January 1 of the first year until December 31 of the final year of his term or until a qualified successor is elected. If a vacancy should occur, the Council will seek to fill the vacancy with another member of that region or in the years' category on a provisional basis. The Council will immediately seek nominations for the vacancy and hold a special election to fill the vacancy as soon as possible after a vacancy occurs.

ARTICLE V. PURPOSE

This Council intends:

- To provide guidelines for the deacon as he strives to pattern his life in the footsteps of Christ.

- To provide for the spiritual and educational needs of each of its deacons.

- To strengthen and preserve the community of deacons in the Archdiocese.

- To be a channel of communication between the Archbishop and the Diaconate Community

- To be an instrument to foster communication between the Diaconate and the Presbyterate.

- To provide the members with sufficient preparation to respond to the needs of the Church and the people of God in the Archdiocese.

- To provide support to the Episcopal Delegate, the Director of Formation, and the Director of Deacon Personnel in performing their duties assigned by the Archbishop.

ARTICLE VI. MEETINGS

Section 1 COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Council shall officially meet once a year in the month of January on a date and time selected by the current Chairman prior to the September/October regional meetings. At this annual meeting, the officers will be elected. Officers elected shall serve from the time of their election until the election of new officers at the next annual meeting. The Chairman, upon at least ten (10) calendar days written notice to the members of the Council and committee chairpersons, can change the date or place of any meeting.

Section 2. SPECIAL MEETINGS

The Chairman of the Council may call special meetings of the Council as deemed necessary by him or upon the written request of any five (5) members of the Council. The Chairman shall cause a special meeting of the Council to be held within fourteen (14) calendar days after receipt of any such request.

Section 3. NOTICE OF MEETINGS

Written notice of regular and special meetings of the Council shall be given to each Council member not less than ten (10) calendar days prior to the meeting. The notice shall specify the place, date, and hour of the meeting and, in the case of a special meeting, the general nature of the business to be transacted.

Section 4. VOTING

The consensus process will be used to arrive at decisions as much as possible, but parliamentary rules will prevail in actual voting. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted. Each member of the Council shall be entitled to one (1) vote at all meetings of the Council.

Section 5. QUORUM

Any five (5) voting representatives shall constitute a quorum and a quorum shall be necessary for the transaction of any business except that a lesser number may adjourn a meeting to another time. At all meetings at which a quorum is present, a majority vote shall be necessary for the adoption of any matter upon which the council votes.

Section 6. OPEN MEETINGS

All meetings of the Council shall be open to deacons and their wives. Such attendance shall be as interested observers only and not with the right to participate. Persons other than members of the Council may participate if on the agenda or invited by the person's representative during the Council meeting.

Section 7. REGIONAL MEETINGS

Regional meetings shall be held at a minimum once per year, and preferably, once per quarter. At each regional meeting, attendance should be taken, and the names of attendees shall be forwarded to the Director of Deacon Personnel for proper credit for CLE purposes. Wives of deacons are encouraged to attend regional meetings with their husbands. Men in Formation to become permanent deacons are also encouraged to attend regional meetings.

ARTICLE VII OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL

Section 1. COMPOSITION

The elected officers of the Council shall be a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, a Secretary, and such other officers as the Council may consider necessary. The Council shall elect all officers from

their own members at the annual January meeting. Officers serve from the time of their election until the election is held the following year. An officer may succeed himself in any office if reelected to the council.

Section 2. CHAIRMAN

The Chairman shall be the presiding officer of the Council and shall have general supervision over the affairs of the Council, subject to the control of the Council. He shall preside at all meetings of the Council and shall be the official liaison to the Archbishop, the Archbishop's delegate, and to the Council of Priests. He shall be an ex-officio member of all committees and shall have such other powers and duties as may from time to time be prescribed by the Council. The Chairman is responsible for the agenda for each of the meetings. In the year following service as Chairman, the Past Chairman, if not re-elected to the Council, shall be a non-voting member of the Council.

Section 3. VICE CHAIRMAN

The Vice-Chairman, in the absence of the Chairman, shall perform the duties and exercise the powers of the Chairman. He shall perform such other duties (from time to time) as the Council shall prescribe.

Section 4. SECRETARY

The Secretary shall keep or cause to be kept a book of minutes of all meetings of the Council and also a roster showing the name and address of each of the representatives of the Council. The Secretary shall provide for the notification of all meetings to the members of the Council, as directed by the Chairman. The Secretary shall be the Chairman of the Calling Committee.

Section 5. REMUNERATION

No officer of the Council or member of the Council shall receive compensation for services to the Council.

Section 6. REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

Any officer may be removed from office by a majority vote of the Council at any regular or special meeting of the Council. Cause for removal from office shall be scandalous behavior, conduct inappropriate for a deacon, or non-fulfillment of duties.

Section 7. VACANCIES

The Council at any regular or special meeting shall fill vacancies in any office.

ARTICLE VIII. COMMITTEES

Section 1. STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committees of the Council shall be Standing and Special. Standing Committees of the Council shall include the Executive Committee, the Servant Ministry Committee, the Spirituality and Growth Committee, the Women's Activities Committee, the Social Activities Committee, the Public Relations and Archives Committee, the Calling Committee, the Nominating Committee, the Diaconate Works Committee, and the Outreach Committee. The Council may, from time to time, establish special committees. The Standing Committees' responsibilities are:

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

There shall be an Executive Committee, which shall be comprised of the three (3) officers of the Council, headed by the Chairman. The Executive Committee shall be subject to the ultimate authority of and any express limitations imposed by the Council. The Executive Committee shall meet as called by the Chairman and may be asked by the Chairman to help

prepare the agenda for the Council meeting. The Executive Committee may pre-schedule and hold its regular meetings without call or notice, at such time and place as the Executive Committee may decide. The Executive Committee shall maintain oversight of all Standing and Special committees.

SERVANT MINISTRY COMMITTEE

The Servant Ministry Committee is responsible for being present to the Community in a supportive, caring and interested way in matters dealing with personal life issues of individuals in the Diaconate Community, e.g., health, bereavement, addiction, etc.

SPIRITUALITY AND GROWTH COMMITTEE

The Spirituality and Growth Committee is responsible for overseeing and planning programs for the continuing spiritual and educational growth of all members of the Diaconate Community and those in formation, in cooperation with the Directors.

WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

The Women's Activities Committee is responsible for overseeing and planning educational, spiritual and social activities for the wives of deacons.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

The Social Activities Committee is responsible for overseeing and planning social activities for members of the Diaconate Community

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

The Public Relations and Archives Committee is responsible for all publicity and communications regarding diaconate activities to members of the Diaconate Community and to the general public. In addition, this committee is responsible for preserving and maintaining the archives of the diaconate.

CALLING COMMITTEE

The Calling Committee is responsible for establishing a network for quick communication to the members and those in formation of any emergency needs of individual members or of the Diaconate Community as a whole.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee is responsible for determining the nominating and election process for the representatives from the regions.

DIACONATE WORKS COMMITTEE

The Diaconate Works Committee will respond to the members of the Diaconate Community as it seeks to provide support to the members and those in formation who request help or whose needs become known by the community.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The Outreach Committee will develop and manage special projects for the Diaconate Community to bring the community together to serve the people of God.

Section 2. **OPEN MEETINGS**

Meetings of the Standing Committees and Special Committees shall be open to all members of the Diaconate Community who desire to attend

Section 3. **COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

The Executive Committee shall appoint a chairperson of the Special and Standing Committees. The Committee Chairperson will be responsible for the selection of the Committee members. Any member of the Diaconate Community may serve as a Committee member.

Section 4. COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Council shall determine the scope, authority, responsibilities and composition of all committees unless otherwise defined elsewhere in these by-laws.

ARTICLE IX. STANDING RULES

The Council may, at any regular or special meeting, adopt Standing Rules, which shall be consistent with the Articles and By-laws of the Council and which, until amended, superseded or revoked, shall govern the Council, its Officers and Committees. Notice of consideration of action on standing rules shall be encouraged but shall not be required prior to any action.

ARTICLE X. RULES OF ORDER

Robert's Rules of Order Revised shall govern the Council in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the Articles, by-laws or Standing Rules of the Council. The Chairman of the Council will appoint a parliamentarian

ARTICLE XI. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

This Constitution and any by-laws may be altered, amended or repealed and the changes may be proposed to the Archbishop by a majority of the Council present at any regular meeting of the Council or at any special meeting of the Council, if at least ten (10) calendar days written notice is given of intention to alter, amend or repeal or to adopt changes at such regular or special meeting.

**APPENDIX A
COUNCIL OF DEACONS
ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA
DEFINITION OF REGIONS**

The establishment of regions for deacons will be the same as the guidelines established for the creation of deaneries for the Presbyterate as determined by the Archdiocese. Henceforth, whenever the deaneries are changed by the Archdiocese, the new regions for the deacons will be changed accordingly.

Attached hereto is the new alignment of the parishes by deaneries.

Appendix 3 – Deacon Job Description

1. Identification

Title: Deacon
Class: Clergy
Supervisors: Archbishop, Director of Permanent Diaconate, Pastor
Regarding: Full-time Residents of the Archdiocese of Atlanta

2. The Permanent Diaconate

In the United States, the permanent Diaconate has been restored for "married and unmarried men of mature years." In practice, this means men must be 35 years or older at the time of ordination. Unmarried deacons and married deacons who become widowers after their ordination will be required to observe the rule of celibacy; that is, they will not be able to marry.

Ordination to the Diaconate involves a permanent office. This does not mean, however, that all deacons would become engaged in full-time ministry. As a matter of general practice, it is expected that deacons will support themselves from their earnings in their everyday occupations. They will perform their specific ministerial duties on weekends, at night or on special occasions. It is envisioned that by working in secular jobs, deacons will help to establish a visible link between the Church and the secular society.

3. Character Expectations

Deacons are reminded that during the Prayer of Consecration at their Holy Ordination, with his hands extended over the candidates, the Archbishop says:

May he excel in every virtue:
In love that is sincere,
In concern for the sick and the poor,
In unassuming authority,
And in holiness of life.
May his conduct exemplify your commandments
And lead your people to imitate his purity of life.
May he remain strong and steadfast in Christ,
Giving to the world the witness of a pure conscience.
May he in this life imitate your Son,
Who came, not to be served but to serve,
And one day reign with Him in heaven.

The Church's prayer for every deacon sets the standard to which all deacons are called.

4. Duties of a Deacon

On June 18, 1967, Pope Paul VI outlined 11 specific tasks that a bishop can assign to a deacon. They are as follows:

- To assist the bishop and priest during liturgical services;
- To administer baptism solemnly;
- To reserve the Eucharist and to give Communion to others —to bring Viaticum to the dying;
- To assist at marriages in the name of the church, and with the pastor's delegation, to impart the nuptial blessing;
- To preside at funerals and burial rites;
- To read the Books of Scripture to the faithful, to instruct and exhort the congregation;
- To preside at prayer services;
- To lead celebrations of the Word;
- To perform charitable and administrative duties and works of social welfare "in the name of the hierarchy";
- To administer scattered communities of Christians in the name of the parish priest and the bishop;
- To encourage and promote the lay ministry.

5. Responsibilities and Obligations to the Archbishop

The deacon's primary responsibilities are to the Archbishop and to serve the needs of the diocese as determined by the Archbishop. These include, but are not limited to the following expectations:

- a. To be respectful and obedient to the Archbishop;
- b. To dedicate oneself to a simple and exemplary life of service which shall bear witness to the life of Christ;
- c. To be faithful and to commit oneself to live out the profession of faith and oath of fidelity integral to ordination;
- d. To accept the diocesan and parochial assignments decreed by the Archbishop;
- e. To fulfill the duties and obligations of the *Letter of Appointment*;
- f. To engage to some significant extent in a high priority diocesan level ministry including:
 - Prison ministry
 - Hospital and care ministry
 - Sanctity of life ministry
 - Hispanic and migration ministry
 - Ministry to the poor
- g. For married deacons, to be a faithful witness to the sacrament of marriage, and for those who are called to celibacy to witness their life in Christ;
- h. To be aware of, study and become competent in the liturgical understandings and skills required of an effective deacon;
- i. To remain active in diaconal ministry unless granted a leave or retired by the Archbishop;

- j. To remain active in the parish or agency assignment according to the terms stated in the *Letter of Appointment* unless otherwise allowed by the Archbishop or his designee;
 - k. To petition the Archbishop in writing regarding any requests for changes in the *Letter of Appointment* including termination or transfer of the assignment;
 - l. To maintain a residence and presence in the Archdiocese of Atlanta unless otherwise granted an approval to be absent by the Archbishop;
 - m. To maintain ongoing spiritual direction which shall be instituted with the appointment by the Archbishop of a spiritual director upon the mutual agreement of the deacon and the designated spiritual director who shall be a priest. Changes in spiritual directors shall be made by petition to the Archbishop;
 - n. To request approval of the Archbishop when one wishes to serve as a deacon on a special occasion in another diocese. Common examples are occasions at which a deacon wishes to baptize an infant grandchild, preside at a wedding of a niece, preside or assist at a funeral or to serve in another diocese when traveling;
 - o. To comply with a directive from this Archbishop or his designee to confer and/or communicate in a timely and appropriate manner regarding issues concerning one's diaconal life or ministry;
 - p. To conform to the diocesan policies for diaconal vesture;
 - q. Comply with the Called to Protect Policies
6. Obligations to the Office of the Permanent Diaconate
- a. To maintain accurate directory information with the Archdiocese including current address, phone, cellular, email, and the currently assigned parish;
 - b. To maintain a current ministry record;
 - c. To submit an annual review of ministry including a conference with one's pastor or other supervisor;
 - d. To inform the Office of the Permanent Diaconate of any significant changes or difficulties in one's life and/or ministry including issues of health, employment, family and marriage, parish ministry, interpersonal relationships and conflicts at the parish or diocesan level associated with the *Letter of Appointment*;
 - e. To file a Funeral Planning Form (see 7.10) with the Archdiocese of Atlanta and updating the plan as needed
7. Obligations for Continuing Formation
- a. To make an annual retreat which shall be reported to the Office of the Permanent Diaconate and which shall include participation in the Deacon Community Retreat two out of every three years unless otherwise excused by the Archbishop
 - b. To participate in the annual Archbishop's Convocation of Deacons or equivalent gathering called by the Archbishop unless otherwise excused by the Archbishop or his designee
 - c. To fulfill the obligations of continuing post-ordination formation and maintaining a current record with the Diaconate Office
8. Parish Responsibilities and Obligations

The majority of deacons in the Archdiocese of Atlanta hold a primary assignment in a parish. In parish matters, the deacon is under the direct supervision of the pastor. In the parish, the deacon:

- a. Supports his pastor and is an active member of the parish community to which he is appointed
- b. Offers spiritual and pastoral leadership through the proclamation of the Word, the liturgical celebrations of baptisms, weddings, funerals, and specially by assisting at the celebration of the Eucharist, following the directives of the diocesan Liturgical Policy.
- c. Provides pastoral presence in the parish; is present to other parish ministers when appropriate in terms of time and talents; attends parish events; assists in ministries needing pastoral assistance as determined by dialogue with the pastor.
- d. Actively fosters parish development in order for the parish to become a community of faith, sacrament and service.
- e. Participates as a collaborative member of the pastoral team/parish staff; participates in the decision making process among staff members; attends meeting, and contributes to the development of the team; provides and participates in mutual support of members.
- f. Promotes good public relations within and beyond the parish; participates in appropriate diocesan organizations; participates in deanery meetings; attends workshops, meetings, and conferences to increase personal skills.
- g. Performs other job-related duties as deemed necessary and/or assigned by the pastor, keeping in mind the marital status of most of the deacons

9. Performance Requirements

- a. **Responsibility:** Is able to work within a collaborative style of leadership; determines direction of ministry based on the priority of needs of the people as understood through consultation with the pastor and other designated leadership bodies; has the awareness and ability to respond to the actual needs present in the parish or agency; has a commitment to pursue growth in personal spiritual life and to share that life with others; fulfills tasks in a pastoral and professional manner; keeps abreast of trends in the field of theology, ecclesiology, liturgy, and other related fields
- b. **Job knowledge:** Must be knowledgeable regarding appropriate diocesan and Diaconate policies and procedures
- c. **Mental Application:** Must be able to work under pressure; must initiate, be creative and anticipate solutions; be sensitive to the needs of people under emotionally stressful conditions; must be able to work within a collaborative environment as a member of pastoral team; must be able to work independently with little direct supervision
- d. **Dexterity and Accuracy:** Must keep accurate records of the Holy Sacrament administered and the sacramental preparation while working with people; must be able to pay attention to detail
- e. **Physical Demands:** Willing to interact with individuals and groups of varying personalities
- f. **Working Conditions:** Space and material to be provided based on needs

- g. **Continuing Formation:** Must meet Archdiocese of Atlanta Permanent Diaconate requirements in continuing education
- h. **Training and Experience:** Familiarity with current pastoral practices

10. Standards of Behavior for Permanent Deacons

Through Ordination we become official representatives of the church, called to Sacramental service of Word, Liturgy and Charity. The National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States clearly states, (#28) *“The Sacrament of Holy Orders marks deacons” with an imprint(‘character’) which cannot be removed and which configures them to Christ, who made himself the ‘deacon’ or servant of all.” For this level of Holy Orders, Christ calls and the Church asks the bishop to ordain deacons to be consecrated witnesses to service.”* The Deacon represents Christ and the Bishop in service to the people of the Church.

By the very nature of their ordination, deacons become public ministers in the church. With that in mind, the following minimal standards of behavior are provided for deacons with faculties, serving the Archdiocese of Atlanta:

- A deacon’s behavior and way of life must be of the highest standard both in ministry and family life. He is expected to work collaboratively with his pastor or supervisor, clergy or staff at his assignment. Deacons must always avoid behavior that could cause a scandal or create a public disgrace within the church or local community.
- A deacon is to show respect and dignity for all persons. He must be sensitive and open to each individual’s perspective or state of mind. He is to be a model of healthy and positive behavior with children, adolescents, and other adults.
- As a representatives of the church a deacon is to express, formally or informally, the Church’s official position or teachings on a subject, even if individually he has not come to fully appreciate or understand that teaching. If a deacon is unfamiliar with those teachings he must seek out, through appropriate local church resources, the proper understanding.
- Every deacon is encouraged to be a faithful citizen without, however, engaging in public partisan activities. Because of the unique position of the deacon when preaching or teaching, a deacon is not to endorse a specific candidate, political party, or position. The Archbishop of Atlanta has specifically indicated that parishioners should not be able to infer through any of our behaviors who we are personally and privately supporting in an election. A deacon must always be sensitive to this limitation when forwarding emails or political information to others.
- Meetings with individuals must always be conducted in a public area (restaurant, library, etc.) or in an office with a window. A deacon must never meet privately with a person in place where inappropriate behavior may be easily inferred, such as a hotel room, private vehicle, or other non-public place. A deacon should never exchange or display materials that may be inappropriate or that cannot be openly shared with other peers.

Appendix 4 – Faculties Pagellae for the Archdiocese of Atlanta



**FACULTIES GRANTED TO PERMANENT DEACONS
ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA**

Pastoral Faculty 1

To preach the word of God everywhere, including the homily at the Sacred Liturgy (Canon 764)

Pastoral Faculty 2

To baptize infants up to the age of reason (seven years). To baptize children and adults over the age of reason when there is grave danger of death. (Canons 861 & 865§2)

Pastoral Faculty 3

To dispense the faithful in *individual* cases from the Eucharist fast for a just reason.

Pastoral Faculty 4

To assist at all marriages within the respective boundaries of a parish to which one has been assigned for diaconal ministry provided one of the parties is a member of the Latin church. (Canon 1111§2)

Pastoral Faculty 5

To witness the marriage of a catechumen with another catechumen or with another non-Catholic, whether baptized or not, in a sacred place within the Archdiocese of Atlanta, when properly delegated by the local pastor if outside your parish of assignment.

Pastoral Faculty 6

When the local ordinary cannot be reached, to dispense those in danger of death from canonical form and all impediments solely of ecclesiastical law except that of priesthood. (Canon 1079)

Pastoral Faculty 7

Deacons with an appointment to a parish are granted the faculty to dispense from all ecclesiastical impediments with the exception of those noted herein whenever everything has been prepared for the marriage or the convalidation thereof and the delay to obtain the dispensation from competent authority would most likely cause serious harm. (Canon 1080)

Pastoral Faculty 8

To waive the publication of the matrimonial banns whenever you consider it inappropriate or unnecessary to publish them (Canon 1067).

Pastoral Faculty 9

In an individual case of genuine necessity, and for a single liturgical celebration, to designate a suitable lay person to distribute Holy Communion. (Immensae Caritatis 1:2)

Pastoral Faculty 10

To impart blessings, except those reserved to the Roman Pontiff or to Bishops. (C. 1169§3)

Pastoral Faculty 11

To permit lay persons who have been properly instructed to administer the following sacramentals in accord with the norms of the liturgical books: The distribution of blessed ashes on Ash Wednesday and the blessing of throats on the memorial of Saint Blaise. (By virtue of ordination deacons may impart blessings). (Canon 1168)

Pastoral Faculty 12

The Archbishop has given prior authorization, as needed, for the following ecumenical and interfaith practices or activities within the Archdiocese of Atlanta with certain stated exception.

DEACON INCARDINATION POLICIES ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA

UNITED STATES CATHOLIC CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS

COMMITTEE ON THE DIACONATE



PROTOCOL FOR THE INCARDINATION/EXCARDINATION OF DEACONS³

PURPOSE OF PROTOCOL

This protocol is published for the purpose of assisting diocesan bishops in applying the procedures for excardination from one diocesan Church and incardination into another diocesan Church, two actions which coalesce into a single juridical act, to the specific case of a deacon. The provisions of this protocol are not intended to constitute particular law. Rather, they are meant to provide a process to implement the provisions of the Code of Canon Law pertaining to the incardination and excardination of deacons in the United States.

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

Historical and Theological Principles

Incardination specifies the relationship of clerics to the Church and the service which they render in it. Taken from the Latin term *incardinare* (to hang on a hinge) incardination is traditionally used to refer to the attachment of the priest or deacon to a diocesan Church headed by the diocesan bishop. Theologically it underscores the close, permanent association of bishops, presbyters and deacons in the Church's ordained ministry and hierarchical structure.

- a. Before the Council of Nicea, incardination was maintained solely by custom and the priests and deacons ordained by a bishop were considered part of a diocesan Church's ordained ministry. From earliest times (e.g. Chalcedon canon 6) all ordinands were ordered to be subject to an ecclesiastical superior; similarly, incardination bound a cleric for life to the diocese for which he had been ordained (Chalcedon, canon 5). The Council of Nicea forbade clerics from moving from one city to another, thus affirming the lasting principle that an ordained cleric is always attached to a diocese.

³ This *Protocol* was approved by the Bishops' Committee for the Diaconate March, 1995 and revised September 23, 2002.

- b. This principle had to be reaffirmed in the following centuries because of the rise in the Middle Ages of ordinations of clerics not attached to a diocesan Church or bishop. Hence the Third Lateran Council (canon 5) forbade bishops from ordaining deacons and priests without a definite title. The desired effect of instilling the incardination of the ordained was not uniformly or universally achieved immediately and the bishops at Trent decreed that no one was to be ordained unless in the bishop's judgment he would be useful or necessary for the church to which he could be assigned.
- c. From this period on, incardination was understood ecclesiologically as referring to the bond between a priest and the diocesan Church for which he is ordained and as an expression of the bishop's solicitude for the particular Church. Canonically the term referred both to one's diocesan Church of ordination as well as the practice of transferring one's allegiance from one diocesan Church to another, and hence from one bishop to another. The ordained priest or deacon may thus be excardinated from one diocesan Church and incardinated into another but only at the judgment of the local ordinaries.
- d. In light of the teaching of Vatican II on the ordained ministry, the restoration of the diaconate as a permanent order in the Church and the revised rites of ordination, the notion of incardination is grounded theologically in the call to ordination in and for the church. Deacons and priests are ministers of the community and as such are representatives of the bishop.

Canonical Prescriptions

- a. Canon 265: "Every cleric must be incardinated into some particular Church. . . ."
- b. Canon 266.1: "A person becomes a cleric through the reception of the diaconate and is incardinated into the particular Church or personal prelature for whose services he has been advanced."
- c. Canon 267.1: "In order for a cleric already incardinated to be incardinated validly into another particular Church, he must obtain from the 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."
- d. Canon 267.2: "Excardination thus granted does not take effect unless incardination into another particular church has been obtained."
- e. Canon 268.1: "A cleric who has legitimately moved from his own particular Church into another one is incardinated into this other particular Church by the law itself after five years if he has made such a desire known in writing both to the diocesan bishop of the host church and to his own diocesan bishop and provided neither of them informed the cleric of his opposition in writing within four months of the reception of this letter."
- f. Canon 269: "A diocesan bishop is not allowed the incardination of a cleric unless:
 - "the necessity or advantage of his own particular Church demands it, with due regard for the prescriptions of the law concerning the decent support of clerics;
 - he is certain from a legitimate document that excardination has been granted, and he also has in addition appropriate testimonials from the excardinating diocesan bishop, in secrecy if necessary, concerning the cleric's life, morals, and studies;

- the cleric has declared in writing to the same diocesan bishop that he wishes to be dedicated to the service of the new particular Church in accord with the norm of law."
- g. In accordance with the provisions of Canon 269.1, a host particular Church accepts a deacon transferring into it from another particular Church and will allow him to function in an official capacity provided there is a need for his services. The host bishop makes the final decision concerning the granting of faculties for all the ordained in his particular Church.
- h. Section A of the Appendix to this Protocol discusses special issues pertaining to deacons. For a thorough commentary on Incardination and Excardination refer to *Clergy Procedural Handbook*, published by the Canon Law Society of America in 1992, edited by Randolph R. Calvo and Nevin J. Klinger.

Implementation

- a. A deacon transferring from his own diocese to another diocese will do the following:
- b. When the decision has been made to move to a new diocese, the deacon will inform the diocesan director of deacon personnel or the vicar for clergy, or the diocesan bishop of the impending move. In like manner, the deacon will write to the bishop of the new diocese to inform the bishop of his pending arrival, stating his intention to call on the bishop or his delegate in person after his arrival (See Section B of the Appendix, Sample Letter 1).
- c. The deacon will request that the director of deacon personnel or vicar for clergy forward to the director of deacon personnel, the vicar for clergy, or the bishop of the new diocese a letter from the previous bishop providing information regarding the new move together with appropriate letters of recommendation and evaluation (See Sample Letter 2).
- d. The diocesan bishop will send or cause to have sent to the receiving bishop and/or his director for deacon personnel or vicar for clergy the following:
- e. A letter informing the receiving bishop of the impending move with a statement of the just cause of the deacon's move (e.g., employment, retirement or health conditions) together with letters of recommendation and evaluation.
- f. A resume of the deacon's personal history, which will be the basis for a character reference together with the recently adopted protocol between bishops and religious superiors testifying to the deacon's record of conduct and moral integrity.
- g. A written record of the deacon's academic, spiritual and pastoral formation, to include notation of academic degrees awarded or citations earned.
- h. An evaluation of the deacon's ministry (Sample Letter 3).
 - Upon arrival in the new diocese, the deacon will call upon the bishop or his director for deacon personnel, or Vicar for Clergy to make his presence known as well as his desire for diaconal faculties and a diaconal assignment.
 - The bishop, or his director for deacon personnel or vicar for clergy will evaluate the deacon's resume and examine the needs of the particular Church. After favorable review, the bishop will give the deacon faculties and a temporary assignment. The bishop would appoint a supervisor to the deacon and indicate that evaluations will take place at six and twelve month intervals (Sample Letter 4).

- After due and prayerful consideration, the deacon will write to his diocesan bishop to advise him of his intent to seek incardination in the diocese in which he is now resident and excardination from his diocese of incardination (Sample Letter 6).
- After the deacon has served in the new diocese for a time, usually for a minimum of two years, and after suitable evaluations, the deacon may petition the bishop for incardination assuming it is his intent to remain permanently within the diocese (Sample Letter 6).
- After receiving letters of suitable evaluation and the recommendation of this director for deacon personnel, or vicar for clergy and having weighed the relative merits of the deacon's petition and the needs of the diocese, the bishop will respond to the petition and indicate his willingness regarding incardination (Sample Letter 7).
- If the bishop expresses a willingness to incardinate the deacon, the deacon will write to his bishop of incardination for a letter of excardination which will include an explanation of the just cause(s) for the request (Sample Letter 8).
- The excardinating bishop executes a document to the effect that the deacon is granted a permanent and unconditional excardination. In accord with Canon 267 the letter must be signed by the diocesan bishop and in view of Canon 270 include the declaration that the excardination is being given for just cause (Sample letter 9).
- After receiving the legitimately executed document of excardination, the new diocesan bishop issues a decree of incardination within one month and notifies the diocese of excardination of the incardination of the deacon. Incardination to the receiving diocese is not completed until both documents have been executed and the bishops (a quo and ad quem) have been duly notified (Sample Letter 10).

Special Issues for Deacons

One of the effects of ordination to the diaconate is first incardination. Those who are ordained 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 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.

Deacons are bound by the obligations and enjoy the rights that come with incardination, the same as any other clergy. They are exempted from some of the obligations (see c. 288), but they are obliged to reverence and obey their ordinary of incardination (c. 273), to accept a duty entrusted to them by their ordinary unless excused by a legitimate impediment (c.274,#2), not to be absent from their diocese of incardination for a notable period of time without at least the presumed permission of their ordinary (c.283,#1).

Special issues arise for deacons who have secular employment which may lead to their transfer outside the diocese. The NCCB *1984 Guidelines*, paragraph 120, addressed this situation as follows:

Should a deacon, after his ordination, move to another diocese, the procedure for excardination and incardination are the same as those for priests. A deacon who moves from one diocese to another will ordinarily be admitted by the bishop into the diaconal ministry of his new diocese, as least after a period of time sufficient for the new diocese to become

acquainted with the deacon and for him to become acquainted with the new diocese and with the order of deacons already at work there. If the new diocese has not implemented the diaconate, the deacon will not exercise his ministry without the permission of the bishop.

Even though he has moved, the deacon remains incardinated in his diocese of first incardination unless a formal or *ipso iure* process of excardination and incardination has been followed. It is important for dioceses to maintain accurate records of the location of their deacons, even though outside the diocese, and for deacons to maintain communication with the diocese of their incardination.

The following should be on file in the diocese or other entity for which a deacon is ordained:

- certificate of baptism
- certificate of confirmation
- certificate of freedom from irregularities and impediments
- certification that studies have been completed
- certificates of installation as lector and as acolyte
- certificate of admission as candidate for orders
- declaration of freedom in applying for the order
- for a married candidate, written consent of his wife and marriage certificate
- testimonial from seminary rector or other competent person concerning the candidate's qualities
- other testimonials of candidate's suitability, if bishop or superior decided to use them (c.1051,2)
- if a religious, certificate of perpetual vows; if a member of a secular institute, certificate of definitive incorporation
- certificate of ordination to the diaconate

Sample Letters

LETTER I

LETTER FROM DEACON TO NEW BISHOP OF DIOCESE TO WHICH HE IS MOVING

Most Reverend Chanute Vicarius
Bishop of Newminster

Your Excellency,

I am a deacon of the Diocese of Oldminster in good standing. By reason of employment for reasons of health and on the recommendation of my doctor, I shall be relocating into your diocese after the beginning of September.

Following my arrival in the Diocese of Newminster, I shall call your office to request an appointment to call on you or your designated representative. I have requested of my bishop that a letter of introduction be sent to you.

Sincerely yours,
Deacon Stephen Diaconos

cc: Vicar for Clergy
Director for Deacon Personnel

LETTER 2

LETTER FROM DEACON TO HIS BISHOP INFORMING OF IMPENDING MOVE FROM DIOCESE

Most Reverend Christian Romanum
Bishop of Oldminster

Your Excellency:

By reason of transfer of employment (or reason of condition of health and recommendation of change in climate by doctor) it is my intention to leave the Diocese of Oldminster and resettle in the Diocese of Newminster, effective the first day of September.

It is requested that a letter be sent to the Bishop of Newminster providing information of this move with appropriate letters of recommendation and evaluation.

Sincerely yours,
Deacon Stephen Diaconos

cc: Vicar for Clergy
Director for Deacon Personnel

LETTER 3

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION & EVALUATION
FROM DEACON'S ORDINARY TO RECEIVING BISHOP

Most Reverend Chanute Vicarius
Bishop of Newminster

Your Excellency:

Deacon Stephen Diaconos, a deacon in good standing in his diocese, by reason of transfer in employment (or for reasons of health and on the recommendation of his doctor) will be relocating into your diocese after the beginning of September.

Enclosed is a resume of Deacon Diaconos's personal history, a written record of his academic, spiritual and pastoral formation, and an evaluation of his ministry. It is requested that favorable consideration be given to providing Deacon Diaconos with a suitable ministerial assignment.

Your assistance in this matter is deeply appreciated.

Sincerely yours,
Christian Romanus
Bishop of Oldminster

LETTER 4

LETTER FROM RECEIVING BISHOP TO DEACON INFORMING OF TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENT

Deacon Stephen Diaconos
Newminster

Dear Deacon Diaconos,

In accordance with the request of the Bishop of Oldminster, your own expressed desire for a ministerial assignment, following a review of your resume and appropriate consultation, in response to ministerial needs you are hereby assigned on a temporary basis to the Pastoral Care Team at St. Mary's Hospital and as pastoral minister in Saint Paul Parish, Rocky Hills, of which the Reverend George Smiley is Pastor, effective immediately.

You are accorded the following faculties of the Diocese of Newminster: (here listed). These faculties are valid until withdrawn.

Father Smiley will also serve as your supervisor and he will conduct evaluations of your ministry at six month intervals.

Sincerely yours,
Chanute Vicarius
Bishop of Newminster

LETTER 5

DEACON'S LETTER TO HIS DIOCESAN BISHOP STATING HIS INTENTION TO SEEK INCARDINATION ELSEWHERE

Most Reverend Christian Romanum
Bishop of Oldminster

Your Excellency:

I have been resident in the Diocese of Newminster for _____ years. It appears that I shall be living here indefinitely. During this time I have been given faculties to minister in the Diocese of Newminster.

After prayerful reflection, it is my intention, God willing, to seek incardination in the Diocese of Newminster and excardination from the Diocese of Oldminster.

Sincerely yours,
Deacon Stephen Diaconos

cc: Vicar for Clergy
Director for Deacon Personnel

LETTER 6

LETTER FROM DEACON TO RECEIVING BISHOP REQUESTING INCARDINATION

Most Reverend Chanute Vicarius
Bishop of Newminster

Your Excellency:

Having served the Diocese of Newminster _____ years with favorable evaluations of my ministry, because of the pastoral need of the Diocese, my own interest and pastoral formation, I desire to continue to provide pastoral ministry.

I have therefore requested excardination from my diocese of incardination, Diocese of Olminster, and the bishop has indicated his willingness to grant this. I now hereby request incardination in the Diocese of Newminster and declare that I wish to be dedicated to the service of the Diocese of Newminster in accord with the norm of law.

Sincerely yours,
Deacon Stephen Diaconos

LETTER 7

LETTER OF INCARDINATING BISHOP TO DEACON

Deacon Stephen Diaconos
Newminster

Deacon Diaconos,

After consulting with the personnel board of this diocese, I am pleased to inform you that I am willing to incardinate you in the Diocese of Newminster. Please write to the Bishop of the Diocese of Oldminster requesting a letter of excardination.

After I have received a letter from the Bishop of Oldminster, I will issue a formal incardination into this diocese.

Asking God's continued blessings upon your ministry among us, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Chanute Vicarius
Bishop of Newminster

LETTER 8

LETTER FROM DEACON REQUESTING EXCARDINATION

Most Reverend Christian Romanum
Bishop of Olminster

Your Excellency:

Because of the pastoral needs of the Diocese of Newminster and because of my own interest and pastoral formation, I desire to continue to provide pastoral ministry in the Diocese of Newminster.

My relocation to the Diocese of Newminster was occasioned by reason of employment. What appeared to have been a temporary arrangement I have now been assured by my employers will be on a more stable basis. The prospect of long-term residence is now assured and the Bishop of Newminster has expressed willingness to incardinate me.

In the light of the above, I am therefore requesting excardination from the Diocese of Oldminster in order that I might incardinate in the Diocese of Newminster.

Sincerely yours,
Deacon Stephen Diaconos

LETTER 9

LETTER OF EXCARDINATING BISHOP TO DEACON

Deacon Stephen Diaconos
Newminster

Dear Deacon Diaconos,

In response to your letter requesting excardination, I am writing to grant you excardination from the Diocese of Newminster. This letter does not take effect until you receive a letter from a bishop who will incardinate you. If there should be any changes in your plans, please notify me.

With my prayers and best wishes for your continued ministry, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Christian Romanum
Bishop of Oldminster

LETTER 10

NOTIFICATION OF INCARDINATION TO DIOCESE OF EXCARDINATION

Most Reverend Christian Romanum
Bishop of Oldminster

Your Excellency:

I am writing to confirm that I have consented to the incardination of Deacon Stephen Diaconos, and I have issued today the necessary letters for this purpose. Enclosed is a copy.

Your assistance in this matter has been deeply appreciated.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Chanute Vicarius
Bishop of Newminster

Enclosure

This *Protocol* was approved by the Bishops' Committee for the Diaconate March, 1995 and revised September 23, 2002.

**The Roman Catholic
Archdiocese of Atlanta**

Application for Incardination

C O N F I D E N T I A L

Appendix 7 – Continuing Education

Archdiocese of Atlanta

Office of the Permanent Diaconate

CONTINUING EDUCATION GUIDELINES **FOR PERMANENT DEACONS**

I. General Principles

- a. In order to enhance the life of faith and further the quality of their diaconal ministry, all permanent deacons are required to participate in a regular program of continuing education and spiritual formation.
- b. Each deacon is expected to earn a minimum of thirty-six (36) clock hours of continuing education (excluding time on retreat) in a two-year period, with at least eight (8) hours in any given year. Fifteen hours are required in each of Category 2 and 3 below and the other six (6) hours can be from either of the two Categories.
- c. Hours of continuing education shall be reported on a special Continuing Education data form supplied for this purpose and forwarded to the Office for the Permanent Diaconate within two weeks of completion of courses, or no later than December 31 of each year. An acknowledgment form will be returned to the deacon.
- d. The Director of the Permanent Diaconate will regularly provide information on available courses and spiritual growth programs and opportunities and will encourage deacons to attend. Spouses of deacons will also be encouraged to participate whenever possible.

2. Categories

- a. Category 1 - Renewal/Spiritual Formation
 - Requirements: A minimum of one retreat each calendar year as required by Canon Law.
 - The cost of the annual retreat is to be paid by the deacon's place of ministry. The place of ministry is not obligated to provide more than the cost of the Archdiocesan sponsored retreat for the deacon himself.
 - The hours on retreat are not included in the education hours required.
 - This category includes days of reflection, spiritual direction and other retreats.
- b. Category 2 - Studies
 - Requirements: A minimum of fifteen hours within a two-year period.
 - Informal studies include auditing courses at any of the colleges and/or institutes as well as attendance at workshops, seminars and conferences that do not require anything from the participant beyond attendance.

- To accommodate the deacons' schedules, and in order to promote attendance at Regional Meetings, each quarterly regional meeting will include a speaker on a topic of interest and importance to the deacon. Those presentations should last approximately 1 hour, and the deacon would be given 2 credit hours for attendance at that meeting. The Regional Representative would report the attendance to the Office for the Permanent Diaconate for compilation.
- To allow for "long-range" planning, One-half (1/2) day sessions are offered at the St. Stephen's Center on seven (7) Saturdays during the year, and each deacon will have the option of attending one or more of those sessions. Each deacon attending will receive 4 credit hours for each session attended. These schedules will be distributed to each pastor as information. The instructor/presenter would be responsible for turning those hours into the Office for the Permanent Diaconate for compilation.
- The deacon could attend other programs at his option, including, but not limited to, LIMEX, Spring Hill, Southern Catholic, programs from an Archdiocesan Office such as from Family Life Office, Pro-Life Office, etc. Distance learning programs such as those offered by Pontifical College Josephinum would also qualify in this category. The deacon himself would be responsible for reporting the hours to the Office for the Permanent Diaconate for compilation, with credits given as appropriate for the courses taken.
- The deacon may not be absent from a significant portion of the program and still claim credit!
- Studies in this category are reported on the Continuing Education Data Form.
- Sessions at the St. Stephen's Center, and at Regional Meetings will be approved for credit by the Office of the Permanent Diaconate prior to offering to the diaconate community.
- Qualifying programs are those presented by a Catholic seminary operating under the Program for Priestly Formation, a Catholic Diaconate formation program operating under the National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States, a Catholic college or university operating under the norms of Ex Corde Ecclesiae, or an instructor affiliated with one of the aforementioned institutions, or a program separately approved by the Director of Deacon Personnel.

c. Category 3 - Practicum

1. Requirements: A minimum of fifteen (15) hours within a two-year period.
2. This category includes:
 - Personal study of books, major articles or other reading materials, viewing video tapes or films, or listening to audio tapes that have a close relationship to one's ministry.
 - Preparation work for teaching a class, preparation for conducting a retreat, day of recollection, etc. and preparation for other related ministerial responsibilities.
 - Practicum in this category is reported on the continuing education data form.

3. Enforcement of Guidelines

- a. The Director of the Permanent Diaconate is responsible for the following:
 - Recording all credits completed and successful completion of the retreat requirement by each deacon.
 - Notification of each deacon no later than November 30 of each calendar year of Credits received in the respective year; and any deficiency needed to complete the requirements.
 - In February of each year, the Director of the Permanent Diaconate notifies the pastor of the deacon of the number of hours of continuing education completed in each of the three Categories along with the number of hours expected to complete. It is suggested the Pastor take corrective action such as requiring a schedule of Continuing Education for the upcoming calendar year.

ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA

Office of the Permanent Diaconate Annual Report on Spiritual Development And Continuing Education

This report is due on December 31st of each year.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION:

Retreat:

Date(s) _____ of Retreat _____ Conducted
by _____

Where? _____

Note: Deacons are required by canon law to make a retreat each year. The retreat must be at least 24 consecutive hours duration.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

CATEGORY 2 - Studies.

1. Requirements: A minimum of fifteen (15) hours within a two-year period.
2. This category includes items listed under CATEGORY 2 of the Continuing Education Guidelines.

Course Title _____ Date(s) _____ Hours _____

Name and Location of Institution

Course Title _____ Date(s) _____ Hours _____

Name and Location of Institution

Category 3 - Practicum

1. Requirements: A minimum of fifteen (15) hours within a two-year period.

2. This category includes items listed under CATEGORY 3 of the Continuing Education Guidelines.

Please use an additional sheet to describe activity in this category. Your description should include book title/publication, author, when the activity was performed and how it relates to your ministry and any other information you deem pertinent.

Deacon Name _____ Date _____

Signature _____

Appendix 8 – Letter of Appointment

Day Date Month, Year

Reverend Mr. John Doe

1234 Anystreet Dr.

City, State 12345

Dear Deacon Doe,

In accordance with your request and the consent of NEW PASTOR NAME., pastor of NEW PARISH OF ASSIGNMENT of Atlanta, Georgia, you are hereby assigned to NEW PARISH OF ASSIGNMENT.

Unless otherwise noted, you may validly use these faculties only within the territory of the archdiocese.

These faculties remain in force as long as you retain your domicile or quasi domicile in this archdiocese, unless they are expressly revoked.

I wish you many fruitful years of ministry as a deacon. Best wishes also to your family as they travel with you on this new journey. Assuring you of my prayers and kind personal regards, I am

Sincerely in Christ,

+ Wilton D. Gregory,

Archbishop of Atlanta

Chancellor

CC: NEW PASTOR NAME, Pastor
DIRECTOR OF PERMANENT DIACONATE

Appendix 9 – Parish Agreement

SUGGESTIONS FOR COMPLETING A PARISH AGREEMENT

The purpose of parish/deacon agreements is to identify and establish accountability for the areas of responsibility assumed by the deacon.

Generally, the deacon can bring only part-time service to his ministry. His priorities must be according to the order of family, occupation and diaconal ministry.

The Archbishop will assign a deacon to a parish if the agreement identifies specific ministries for which the deacon will be responsible. In each agreement, the Archbishop requires that the deacon have a least one major area of parish work which is specified, in detail. The identified areas of ministry should be assumed as on-going service rather than as the result of a call from the rectory or as needed.

The ministries assumed by the deacon should be detailed in the MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT. A regular preaching schedule for deacons, who have been granted faculties, should be indicated. Further, if possible, a regular schedule for baptizing should be identified.

The following agreement language, format and suggestions are not considered to be all inclusive. They have been found to be most acceptable in describing ministerial responsibilities for the deacon:

- Develop and implement a parish Baptism program including family preparation and post-Baptism follow-up visitation. He will administer the sacrament on a regular schedule in rotation with other clergy assigned to the parish.
- Assist in the marriage preparation program as indicated below:
- Complete and record the pre-marriage inventory information
- Administer the FOCCUS inventory
- Conduct sessions with the couple based upon the result of the FOCCUS inventory
- Schedule and assign couples to deanery Engaged Couple Conference or Engaged Encounter Weekend
- Follow through with preparation and planning for the celebration of the marriage
- Witness the marriage when requested to do so
- Develop, implement and supervise the parish RCIA program.
- Preach on a monthly basis, at all masses, in rotation with other parish clergy (contingent on receiving faculties)
- Assume responsibility for the parish evangelization program. He will conduct a census and maintain an updated information system on parish families and needs of the community.
- Will develop and coordinate a parish outreach program that will include such activities as ministering to the sick, the needy, the homebound, the unchurched and lapsed members of our parish family.

EACH PARISH HAS UNIQUE NEEDS. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PASTOR(S) AND THE DEACON TO DEVELOP APPROPRIATE MINISTRIES TO MEET THOSE NEEDS.

**ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA
OFFICE OF THE PERMANENT DIACONATE**

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT FOR _____
(Name of Permanent Deacon)

Assigned to _____
(Name of Parish) (Location of Parish)

It is expected that the deacon will function in all Sacraments and Parochial areas appropriate to his ministry. With this in mind, we propose the following plan, detailing the major ministerial functions which he will assume:

(Use reverse side if additional space is required)

Signature _____
(Pastor, Team, Director)

Signature _____ Reviewed/Signature _____
(Permanent Deacon) (Director of Permanent Deacons)

Approved _____ Date _____
(Archbishop of Atlanta)

Appendix 10 – Deacon Personnel Board Directives

I. Purpose

The Deacon Personnel Board works in consultation with the Director, Office of the Diaconate to set and apply policy regarding deacon assignments, deacon ministry reviews and deacon status. This includes deacon assignments, deacon transfers, diaconal Ministry Agreements, ministry reviews and the change of status of individual deacons.

The Board will act on all matters directed by the Archbishop through the Director, Office of the Diaconate. The Board is accountable to the Archbishop through the Director, Office of the Diaconate. In all consultations and decisions, the Board will strive to represent the best interests of the Church (Archdiocese of Atlanta) and the Permanent Diaconate Community.

II. Membership

A. Discerned Members

The Deacon Personnel Board will consist of a combination seven deacons including the Director of the Permanent Diaconate, the Associate Director of Formation and five active deacons of the archdiocese. Additionally there are two priest representatives and the Episcopal delegate. The replacement of members whose terms expire will be discerned, and selected by the Board with the approval of the Archbishop. Nominations for replacement deacon members will come from the entire diaconal community. Priest replacements are made at the recommendation of the Archbishop. Members will serve staggered three-year terms to insure that the entire Board's terms do not expire at the same time.

Members shall serve until their replacement has been appointed. Vacancies shall be filled by appointment of the Director to cover the unexpired term of the member who left. All terms expire on December 31. The effective date of appointment to the Board is January 1.

A procedure for the discernment, nomination and selection of members is attached as Addendum A to this document. The discerned members' role is to investigate, analyze, discern, discuss and come to consensus regarding matters before them and to make recommendations to the Director for approval.

Members serve for a three-year term and may be selected for an additional three-year term. No member may serve more than two consecutive terms back to back. A member serving two terms may be re-selected for another term after one term off the Board. The Director, at his/her discretion may extend the term of a member to meet Diocesan needs.

B. Standing Members

1. Episcopal Delegate

- Represents both the diaconate and the Archbishop of Atlanta in all matters. Attends all Board meetings and actively listens to and participates in the Board's deliberations.
- Is the final authorizer and decision maker in any course of action and, while always striving to achieve consensus with the Board, may pursue actions different from those recommended by the Board.

2. Director, Office of the Permanent Diaconate

- Establishes the meeting agenda with input solicited from members of the Board and the approval of Episcopal Delegate. The agenda is to be in member's hands a minimum of one week before meeting date.
- Facilitates all meetings.
- Facilitates Board discussions and encourages participation by all members.
- Assists the Board in developing a consensus around a particular issue by sharing information, by providing his/her own perspectives, or by identifying common elements or areas of agreement that are present in the Board's discussion.
- Recaps assigned actions and due dates including the maintenance of an action item list.
- Monitors the work of the Board between regular meetings.

3. Associate Director(s) of Formation, Office of the Permanent Diaconate

- Provides needed background information on formation candidates
- Facilitates meetings in the absence of the Director

4. The Assistant to the Director, Office of the Diaconate (ex-officio):

- Prepares meeting minutes, and action item list with inputs from Chairperson.
- Maintains the membership roster and deacon personnel data.
- Prepares and disseminates materials for the Board meetings.
- Maintains Board correspondence and files
- Establishes appointments for deacon reviews and follows up on appointments
- Attends all meetings, but not involved in discussion and decision-making

III. Meetings

Meetings will be held January, March, May, September, November, or as needed. For purposes of discernment the Episcopal Delegate, Director, one priest, and at least three deacons must be present.

IV. Function

- **Deacon Assignments:** The Deacon Personnel Board will serve as a resource regarding opportunities for diaconal ministry within the diocese. The Board will review requests from deacons, pastors, the Archbishop, the Director, or from the Board for assignments or reassignments and make recommendations to the Archbishop. The reassignment process is shown in figure 1.
- **Questionnaires:** Representing the Deacon Personnel Board, the Director will distribute a confidential Deacon Questionnaire to each deacon annually. This will be used to inquire about current parish assignment, length of service in current parish, desire to transfer now or in the future. There will also be an opportunity for the deacon to raise concerns, point out areas of expertise, discuss ongoing formation hours and point out any skills improved or acquired.
- **Ministry Reviews** The Deacon Personnel Board will conduct a Ministry review of individual deacons at least every three or four years (goal) and no longer than six years or when requested by the Archbishop, the Director, the deacon, or the deacon's ministry

supervisor. The results of this appraisal will be given in writing to the Director who will communicate them to the deacon.

- **Change of Deacon Status:** The Deacon Personnel Board will make recommendations to the Director regarding change of status of individual deacons. This includes retirement, leaves of absence, sabbatical, removal of faculties, and return to full ministry. All changes of status are made with the final approval of the Archbishop

Additional information about individual status is included in the Archdiocese of Atlanta Permanent Diaconate Policies and Procedures Directory.

V. Guidelines

A. Ministry Agreement

A Ministry Agreement between the Deacon and the deacon's supervisor will document the mutually agreed to understanding of the duties and responsibilities of both parties to the agreement. A Ministry Agreement will be completed for each new assignment, change of assignment terms, or change of deacon supervisor. The deacon, deacon's wife, deacon supervisor and the Director will witness their concurrence by signing the document. The original Agreement will be kept by the Director.

B. Initial Assignments

A deacon's initial assignment will ***normally*** be to their home parish for four (4) years. After the initial assignment (four years), the deacon may be assigned to a parish or ministry other than his initial assignment. These assignments will be made following Change of Assignment directives established in this document.

Additionally, deacons may be assigned to ministries (e.g., hospitals, prisons, and correctional institutions) or to diocesan functions (e.g., Marriage Tribunal, Office of the Diaconate, etc.) in addition to the deacons primary parish assignment. Such assignments may constitute the deacon's primary ministry. When this is the case, a parish assignment will normally be made in order that the deacon may exercise his ministries of Word and Worship..

C. Change of Assignment

All assignment change requests are reviewed by the Personnel Board. Changes in assignment are made only by the Archbishop. Requests for change of assignment can come from the deacon, his supervisor, pastor, the Director, or the Archbishop. The Director has the responsibility for communicating all assignment changes to all of the involved parties.

D. New Pastor During Current Assignment

When a new pastor is assigned to a parish, the deacon(s) is encouraged to function according to the existing Ministry Agreement for up to one year. A new Ministry Agreement will be formally developed during this period by the pastor and deacon(s).

VI. Confidentiality

All members of the Deacon Personnel Board are bound by charity and love to strict confidentiality regarding matters dealt with by the Board. This confidentiality prevails even after a deacon or priest is no longer a member of the Board. If it is certain that a current Board

member has broken confidentiality, they will be asked to resign as a member of the Board. If a past Board member breaks confidentiality, he will not be allowed to serve on the board again.

DEACON PERSONNEL BOARD

PROCEDURE FOR CHANGE OF ASSIGNMENT

- I. When the deacon requests re-assignment (which includes a new dual assignment)
 - a. A copy of the written request is provided to all members of the Deacon Personnel Board (the “Board”)
 - b. The Chair of the Personnel Board (the “Chair”) (or such other person designated by the Director of Deacons) contacts the deacon and his wife and requests that they attend the next scheduled Board meeting (or, if necessary, at a specially called meeting of the Board)
 - c. The deacon and his wife meet with the Board and discuss the considerations identified in the attachment to this procedure
 - d. If after the meeting with the Board the deacon wishes to continue with his request for transfer, the Chair or another delegated representative of the Board meets with the deacon’s current pastor (and Ministry Supervisor, if appropriate) to discuss the potential change of assignment
 - e. If, after the meeting with the current pastor (and Ministry Supervisor, if appropriate), the change of assignment is still on-going, the Chair or another delegated representative of the Board contacts the new pastor and requests a meeting
 - f. If, after the Board has met with the new pastor, the change of assignment is still on-going, the Chair or another delegated representative of the Board meets with the new pastor in the presence of the deacon and his wife
 - g. Topics for discussion at the meeting with the new pastor should include the Deacon Ministry Agreement, and remunerations for expenses or other remuneration, level of involvement of the deacon’s wife and family, etc.
 - h. When all the above steps have been completed, the Chair notifies the members of the Board
 - i. With the agreement of the members of the Board, a recommendation is made to the Bishop for a change of assignment.

- II. When the current pastor requests a change of assignment for a deacon
 - a. A copy of the written request is provided to all members of the Deacon Personnel Board (the “Board”)
 - b. The Board meets to discuss the request at the next scheduled meeting of the Board or at a specially convened meeting of the Board
 - c. The Chair or another delegated representative of the Board meets with the current pastor to discuss his request
 - d. Following the meeting with the current pastor, the Chair or another delegated representative of the Board provides an update for discussion by the Board at the next scheduled meeting of the Board or at a specially convened meeting of the Board
 - e. The Board considers the request and, in a discernment process that incorporates the considerations contained in the attachment, identifies potential parishes and/or ministries to which the deacon might be assigned
 - f. The Chair (or such other person designated by the Director of Deacons) contacts the deacon and his wife and requests that they attend the next scheduled Board meeting (or, if necessary, at a specially called meeting of the Board)
 - g. The deacon and his wife meet with the Board to discuss the request made by the current pastor, including in the discussion the considerations identified in the attachment to this procedure
 - h. If, after meeting with the Board, agreement is reached on one or more possibilities for a change of assignment, the Chair or another delegated representative of the Board meets with the new pastor/s to discuss the potential change of assignment, using the considerations contained in the attachment to this procedure
 - i. If, after the meeting with the new pastor/s a change of assignment is agreed upon, the Chair provides the members of the Board with an update and the Board agrees to the change of assignment at the next scheduled meeting of the Board or at a specially convened meeting
 - j. The Chair or another delegated representative of the Board meets with the new pastor in the presence of the deacon and his wife
 - k. Topics for discussion at the meeting with the new pastor should include the Deacon Ministry Agreement, and remunerations for expenses or other financial support, level of involvement of the deacon’s wife and family, etc.
 - l. When all the above steps have been completed, the Chair notifies the members of the Board
 - m. With the agreement of the members of the Board, a recommendation is made to the Bishop for a change of assignment.

- III. When the Bishop requests re-assignment (which includes a new dual assignment)
 - a. The procedure is similar to that shown above for a change of assignment requested by the current pastor (see 0 above), with special sensitivity to special circumstances or issues raised by the Bishop.

- IV. When the Director of Deacons requests re-assignment (which includes a new dual assignment)
 - a. The procedure is the same as for a change of assignment requested by the deacon (see I above).

- V. When the Deacon Personnel Board requests re-assignment (which includes a new dual assignment)
 - a. The procedure is the same as for a change of assignment requested by the deacon (see I above).

ATTACHMENT TO DEACON PERSONNEL BOARD PROCEDURE FOR CHANGE OF ASSIGNMENT

Considerations To Be Incorporated In Assessment Of Requests For Deacon Re- Assignment

- I. The overriding concern of the Personnel Board shall be the health and well being of all parties, namely the deacon and his wife and his family, the pastor and the parochial vicars and parishioners, and the effect that a change of assignment will have on the life of the parish and the Archdiocese.

II. Circumstances under which a change of assignment is not recommended

A change of a deacon's assignment will not normally be recommended if the date of the proposed change of assignment coincides with the reassignment of the Pastor of the deacon's current parish (which the deacon would be leaving) or of the new parish (to which the deacon is being assigned). Under either of these circumstances a deacon will normally remain in his existing assignment in his current parish for one year in the interests of stability and continuity for the parish, and also to provide the new pastor with an experienced and knowledgeable resource to assist him in his new role as pastor.

Similarly, a delay in change of assignment of one year may also not be recommended if the date of the proposed change coincides with the reassignment of a Parochial Vicar in the current or proposed parish.

III. When a change of assignment appears to be in order

During the discernment and deliberation that takes place before any reassignment is recommended to the Bishop by the Deacon Director, the following should be discussed with the deacon and his wife (and his family if deemed appropriate):

- a. Length of time in parish prior to ordination
- b. Length of time in parish as ordained deacon
- c. Details of ministries in which the deacon is involved and the effect that his departure will have on these ministries
- d. Frequency of proclaiming the Word and preaching at Sunday Mass
- e. Details of ministries in which the deacon's wife is involved and the effect that her departure will have on these ministries if she does not continue them in the parish

- f. The desire of the wife to continue to exercise her ministries in the current parish when her husband is assigned to another parish
- g. The effect that the deacon's transfer will have on his children if they are in school in the current parish and/or if they are they involved in ministries in the current parish; and what effect the deacon's transfer will have on the their participation in school and or ministries
- h. The number and frequency of changes of pastor and/or parochial vicars in the current parish over the past five to ten years; if turnover has been high, an assessment of the effect of yet another change on the life of the parish
- i. The level of financial support provided to the current parish by the deacon and his family and the effect of the loss of this to the parish
- j. The level of financial reimbursement or support provided to the deacon by the current pastor and the effect of the potential loss of this on the deacon and his family
- k. The emotional investment in and attachment to the parish and to its members by the deacon, his wife and his family.

With regard to the last consideration, the emotional attachment should not be overlooked. Very often, the members of the parish are more than simply friends and acquaintances of the deacon and his family; they are his family. He has often lived in the parish for many years and has become almost a part of the parish's spiritual, ministerial and financial infrastructure.

Appendix II – Diaconate Database

The Atlanta Archdiocese maintains a computer-based data base of all Deacons in Formation (DIF) and Permanent Deacons (PD). A single data base (DB) is maintained for both because a high percentage of the data is common to both. Data specific to either DIFs or PDs are excluded from view of the other type. An initial screen permits filtering data to access only select groups, e.g. just men in one deanery, only those retired, etc. Data of a personal and private nature are not maintained although check boxes are provided when applicable to indicate that these data are on file. The structure of the DB is modular permitting easy modification and expansion. The following broad categories of data are maintained:

- **Contact Information** – name, address, email, etc.
- **Parish Information** – parish of baptism, entry into formation program and various parish connections while in the program and later as a PD
- **Formal Education** – Education acquired through established colleges and universities
- **Diaconal Education** – Education acquired during formation and beyond excluding Formal Education
- **Ministries** – major ministries in which a man is involved

Several outputs can be selected, e.g. simple listings of DIFs or PDs, statistical reports and data files for importing into other programs, e.g. email addresses to Outlook. Statistical reports facilitate satisfying canonical requirements, e.g. annual retreat attendance, continuing education, ethnicity and age breakdowns, etc.

The DB is centrally located on the Archdiocesan network and is accessed and maintained remotely from any computer with high speed Internet access. It is password-protected and backed up daily. This arrangement maximizes data integrity while providing easy and convenient access.