

from the true and distinctive nature of the order. As far as possible, the deacon should be allowed to exercise fully the special gifts and talents of his/her ministry, avoiding the temptation to use deacons as curates or supply clergy.

The Role of the Deacon during the Bishop's Visitation and in Diocesan Eucharists

All of the customary above applies when the Bishop is the Celebrant. In addition, the Bishop's chaplain will be a deacon, if possible. If two deacons are available, both should serve the Bishop at the altar.

Because of the unique relationship of the deacon to the Bishop, the deacons immediately precede the Bishop in procession.

Relational Issues

The Relation of Deacons and Eucharistic Ministers

The clarifying rubric on page 408 (BCP) states that lay persons are not to administer the chalice when there are sufficient priests and deacons to do so. This rubric has been reinforced by the incorporation of the same prohibition in the new canon on Lay Eucharistic Ministers. [Title III, Canon 3, Sec. 5(c)]

Deacons and the Marriage Rite

When assisting a priest at a marriage ceremony, the deacon should, as the rubric suggests, deliver the charge, request the Declaration of Consent, read the Gospel, read the prayers, (p. 429) and perform the functions outlined above in the section on the Eucharist. With the Bishop's permission, a deacon may perform marriages in this state but may not bless the marriage.

Deacons and Ministration to the Sick

In the absence of or at the request of a priest, it is appropriate for a deacon to anoint with oil when praying for the sick. In this diocese permission is given for deacons to anoint in public healing services and to assist the priest in the laying on of hands. (BCP p. 456)

Deacons and the Burial Office

When assisting at a funeral, the deacon will read the Gospel, introduce the Prayers of the People, and dismiss the people following the Commendation. The deacon will serve at the Eucharist in the customary manner.

Communion from the Reserved Sacrament

Historically the deacon has been the minister of Communion to those unable to be present for the Eucharist, such as the sick and shut-ins. The deacon is not normally the Eucharistic Officiant in the church setting, administering communion from the Reserved Sacrament in the context of the so-called "Deacon's Mass". Routine employment of the deacon in this role contributes to excessive clericalization of the diaconate and detracts

Deacons should preach on a regular basis.

The deacon at celebrations of the Eucharist should wear diaconal vestments, including the dalmatic, when available.

The Role of the Deacon in Holy Baptism

When a deacon is one of the ministers at Baptism, the deacon will read the Gospel, read the prayers for the candidate and assist the Celebrant by pouring water into the font and over the candidate, holding towels, oil stock, candles or prayer book, and otherwise be of service.

Deacons are not normally the sole officiant at Baptism and must have the permission's permission to do so in each case.

The Role of the Deacon in Proper Liturgies for Special Days

Ash Wednesday

It is appropriate for the deacon to read the invitation on page 264 of the BCP and to assist in the imposition of ashes. Only the Celebrant leads the Litany of Penitence. It is also appropriate for the deacon to sing or say the Great Litany or other litanies at any time they are used.

Palm Sunday

When a deacon is one of the ministers on Palm Sunday, the deacon will read the Palm Sunday Gospel, as well as the Passion, unless a three or multiple-reader division is employed for the Passion. The deacon bids the people to the procession.

Maundy Thursday

When a deacon is one of the ministers on Maundy Thursday, the deacon will prepare the towels, ewer and basin and will assist the Celebrant in the washing of feet.

Good Friday

When a deacon is one of the ministers of the Good Friday liturgy, the deacon participates in the reading of the Passion as on Palm Sunday. For the Solemn Collects the deacon sings or says the introduction and the biddings. The Celebrant sings or says the Collects. At the veneration of the cross the deacon brings the cross into the church.

Easter Vigil

When a deacon is one of the ministers during the East Vigil, the deacon will bear the Paschal Candle in procession and will sing or say the Exsultet.

The Liturgical Customary for Deacons

Presented to the Deacons Council by The Rt. Rev'd Keith B. Whitmore, 2005

Preface

The rubrics of The Book of Common Prayer (1979) have restored to the diaconate the traditional roles of the deacon in the Eucharist and other rites of the Church. Rubrics pertaining to the role of the deacon are to be firmly and consistently observed. A priest should not assume the diaconal role in the liturgy unless a deacon is not present and participating in the liturgy. Guidelines to assist clergy and lay ministers in the proper interpretation of the role of the deacon are listed in the references appended to this Customary.

The Role of the Deacon in the Parish Eucharist

When a deacon is one of the ministers at the Eucharist, the deacon will read the Gospel, read at least the bidding(s) of the Prayers of the People, read the Exhortation to Confession, lead the Confession and pronounce the dismissal.

When a deacon is one of the ministers at the Eucharist, the deacon will prepare the altar. This includes receiving the offerings and oblations from the acolyte or other lay person, preparing the vessels, attending to a second chalice or paten prior to the administration, and performing or supervising the ablutions.

When a deacon is one of the ministers at the Eucharist, the deacon will assist in administering communion, offering either the bread or the wine.

It is appropriate and recommended, when a deacon is one of the ministers at the Eucharist, that the deacon read the Kyrie, Summary of the Law (Rite I), the Comfortable Words (Rite 1), and elevate the cup at the Celebrant's words, "The Gifts of God for the People of God," while the Celebrant elevates the paten.

When it is to be used, the deacon may, at the discretion of the Celebrant, read the Exhortation (p. 316). The Exhortation should not be read at the administration of communion from the Reserved Sacrament by a deacon.

If more than one deacon is a minister at the Eucharist, it is appropriate that both be at the altar with the Celebrant. However, a second deacon or priest or lay person who might stand with the Celebrant and deacon at the altar should not be referred to as the "Sub-deacon," a term which is confusing since the renewal of the diaconate. "Right" and "left" deacon are more appropriate designations.

When the deacon is administering bread during the communion and comes to a child or adult who does not receive, it is appropriate for the deacon to say, "May the Lord bless you and keep you," or to say, "Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," or to say one of the concluding sentences from the Daily office.