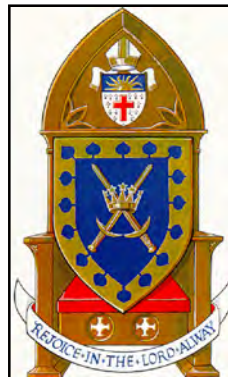


The Diaconate Renewed: Service, Word and Worship

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Foreword



The Right Reverend Robert Hardwick, Bishop of Qu'Appelle

I heartily recommend this publication to all deacons, to those discerning a call to ordained ministry, and to every congregation in the Anglican Church of Canada. The 'distinctive diaconate' is a unique calling and I commend this publication for further study that all would be better informed about this ordered ministry.

This publication, and indeed the example set by its author, Deacon Canon Michael Jackson, is a call to the Church to correct the prevailing assumption that the diaconate is merely a transitional year before priesting or an apprenticeship for the priesthood; or that it is only priesthood that really matters.

In a Church of England report, *The Mission and Ministry of the Whole Church*, 2007, it was heartening to read of the missional role of deacons in their communities. As such, the deacon plays a crucial part in calling the Church to engage in its mission and in leading that mission by personal example. It is encouraging to witness this missional call being lived out in its deacons across the Anglican Communion, as it was in the early Church.

Liturgically and missionally, the order of the diaconate is to be commended. This publication goes a long way to help recover this primary and distinctive order.

*Bishop Rob Hardwick
Diocese of Qu'Appelle*

Author



D. Michael Jackson was ordained deacon in the Diocese of Qu'Appelle in 1977 and has served as a deacon at St. Paul's Cathedral in Regina, Saskatchewan, since then. He is the author of a number of articles and presentations on the diaconate and has been an active member of the Association of Anglican Deacons in Canada since its formation in 2000. He is co-chair of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Covenant Implementation Committee of the Diocese of Qu'Appelle and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Regina. Deacon Jackson was installed as a canon of the Diocese of Qu'Appelle in 2013.

Preface

A first version of Part A of this study was prepared in 1997 for the Diocese of Qu'Appelle, Anglican Church of Canada, at the request of Bishop Duncan Wallace. In the following decade, major writings and further experience with the order substantially changed perspectives on the diaconate. Consequently, at the request of Bishop Gregory Kerr-Wilson, the study was revised and expanded in 2008. Since then, it has been further revised and updated. Part B, on the liturgical role of the deacon, was written as a separate paper in 2011. Chapter VI, "Vestments for the Deacon," was first published in *Diakoneo*, publication of the Association for Episcopal Deacons, in 2012 (Vol. 34, #5). Recent developments in the Roman Catholic dioceses in Saskatchewan have prompted the latest revisions.

The author thanks Deacon Ormonde Plater, of the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana, distinguished diaconal author and liturgist, for reviewing this text and making many helpful suggestions for its improvement. He also thanks Dr. Brett Salkeld, archdiocesan theologian of the Archdiocese of Regina, for his insights into the diaconate, not only in Saskatchewan but in the Roman Catholic Church in general; and for inviting the author to speak to the candidates in the archdiocese's first diaconal formation program and their spouses in October 2014.

Finally, many thanks to the Right Reverend Robert Hardwick, current Bishop of Qu'Appelle, for contributing the Foreword and thus affirming episcopal support for the diaconate.

*D. Michael Jackson
Regina, October 2014*

Introduction

The author has been a deacon since 1977. He is one of the longest-serving – although not the oldest! – deacons in the Anglican Church of Canada. For many years, he was challenged about why he was a deacon: “When are you becoming a real minister?” “When are you being ordained?” “Why are you not going on to the priesthood?” People from non-episcopal churches are baffled by the order of deacons. Within the Anglican Communion (and indeed other Churches), many are ambivalent or sceptical about the diaconate. While Anglicans have paid lip service to the three orders of ordained ministry of bishop, priest or presbyter, and deacon, in practice they have more usually been in the situation described by a preacher at an ordination of (transitional) deacons in the Episcopal Church in the United States:

[The preacher] knows full well that this person in front of him, now being ordained with such solemnity, will to all intents and purposes have to go through it all again in six months or a year’s time to be ordained as a priest. Of course we say, “Once a deacon, always a deacon,” but this is pious fiction. The ordination of a deacon, as at present practised, is usually little more than a farce.¹

The diaconate has been, and can be, far different from this aptly-named “fiction” and “farce”.

In Part A of this study, we trace the order of deacons from its origins and see how it ended up as an apprenticeship to the priesthood; then explore its true purpose, current revival and potential as a unique form of ordained ministry, with major ecumenical implications. Our purpose is to introduce the diaconate to those who may not be familiar with it and to provide helpful information to deacons and diaconal candidates.

While nearly half of the present text deals with deacons in worship, this is by no means intended to reflect the priorities or duties of the deacon. Section B, on worship, was written as a separate study in response to a number of requests and has been added to the original paper on the diaconate. It can be omitted by those not inclined to delve into the details of liturgy. However, amidst the great variety of diaconal ministries – which we shall see in Part A – the liturgical role is, or should be, the one common factor for all deacons.

For the benefit of those who may not have the opportunity to do further reading in the field, we summarize historical and current writings on the ministry of deacons. A variety of publications have enriched knowledge and understanding of the diaconate, especially in the Episcopal Church of the United States in the 1980s and 1990s, thanks in large part to the North American Association for the Diaconate (now the Association for Episcopal Deacons); then in the Church of England; and latterly in the Roman Catholic Church in the United States. We gratefully acknowledge all those who have contributed to the study of the diaconate and commend their work through the footnotes and bibliography.

We hope that this modest publication will be of some help to, and stimulate reflection by, present deacons, those contemplating the diaconate, and indeed all interested in the Church’s ministry.

¹ Reginald Fuller, quoted in James M. Barnett, *The Diaconate: A Full and Equal Order*, revised edition (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995), xi.

Part A The Diaconate – Ancient and Modern Ministry

Chapter I The Diaconate in History

The biblical Greek word *diakonia*, from which we derive “diaconate” and “deacon,” is usually translated as “service,” with connotations of humble assistance to others. However, the New Testament scholar John N. Collins and others have challenged this interpretation on linguistic grounds. *Diakonia* and its cognate words, they tell us, had a much broader sense than “service” in New Testament Greek, also including “ministry,” “message,” “agency” or “attendant.”² Similarly, the office of deacon, from the Greek word *diakonos*, has often been misinterpreted, at least since the 19th century, as meaning essentially a servant focusing on charitable work, whereas it originally had wider meanings of (among others) agent, messenger and representative.³ In any event, the notion of service to others, taken from Jesus’ references to himself as a servant and to the ministry of humble service, applies to *all* his followers and not just to one particular ecclesial office; it is a key to the new life, the Kingdom of God, and the Church. The early Church’s fundamental nature was organic, not hierarchical, stressing the oneness of a community where all have both common and particular functions. It is in **baptism** that all Christians are called to ministry and given a charisma which includes service and the other connotations of *diakonia*. “Baptism, not ordination, confers authority to be the Church.”⁴

The Origins of the Diaconate

Given this original notion that ministry belonged to the *laos*, to all the baptized in a horizontally-structured church, it took some time for specific orders of ministry to emerge. *Acts* 6: 1-6 recounts how the disciples responded to complaints from the Hellenists that “their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food:” the community appointed “seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom” to handle this task, freeing the disciples to devote themselves “to prayer and to serving the word.” The apostles prayed over and laid hands on the seven. Some commentators have read much into this passage, citing it as the origin or at least the forerunner of the diaconate, since the mission of the Seven was the administration of charity in the young church.⁵ Most scholars, however, agree that the accounts of the ministry of Stephen and Philip in *Acts* and the commissioning of the Seven in *Acts* 6: 1-6 do not refer to a distinct order of deacons, although the Seven exercised some diaconal functions.⁶

While Paul refers to *episcopoi* and *diakonoi* in *Philippians* 1: 1, these terms are often translated as “overseers” and “agents,” or “supervisors” and “assistants,” as well as “bishops” and “deacons.”⁷ It has been noted that the early Church tended anachronistically to “read into apostolic Church order the

² Collins examines in detail the linguistic evidence in *Diakonia: Interpreting the Ancient Sources* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990). In *Deacons and the Church: Making connections between old and new* (Leominster: Gracewing; Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2002), he further analyses his findings and applies them to the diaconate. The results of this research are well summarized by Ormonde Plater in *Many Servants: An Introduction to the Diaconate*. Revised Edition (Cambridge, MS: Cowley Publications, 2004), xii-xiii.

³ Ibidem.

⁴ Barnett, 13.

⁵ See Alexander Strauch, *The New Testament Deacon* (Littleton, CO: Lewis & Roth, 1992). Writing from an evangelical perspective, the author sees the Seven as the prototype and model for contemporary deacons as “servant-officers” in “Bible-believing churches.” These “boards of deacons,” however, are very different from the ordained deacons in the episcopal churches.

⁶ Barnett, 33. See also Collins, *Deacons and the Church*, 47-50, 87-89, and Plater, 11-12.

⁷ See Collins, *Diakonia*, 235-236, and Plater, 11.

fully developed diaconate of the second century.”⁸ In I *Corinthians* 12: 4-11 and 27-31, we note the variety of ministries, not necessarily permanent and not always formally commissioned. In *Romans* 16:1, Paul refers to “our sister Phoebe” as a *diakonos*. There is, again, debate as to whether this refers to a deacon as the office as later understood. One scholar quotes a commentary by Origen (185-255): “this text teaches with the authority of the Apostle that even women are instituted deacons in the Church.”⁹ Collins prefers to translate the word here as “delegate.”¹⁰ Nonetheless, indications are that women were officially commissioned for *diakonia* and when the office of deacon later emerged, it appears to have been open to women. According to Collins, in I *Timothy* 3: 11 “there is “a seemingly clear case to be made for the inclusion of women among the deacons,” although this is disputed by others.”¹¹

The consensus of scholars is that in the Pauline churches of the early New Testament period there was no uniform structure of offices. However, the roots were there, and formal ministry was taking shape; by the time of I *Timothy* and the later New Testament church we find more consistent references to orders of ministry. I *Timothy* 3: 1-7 lists the qualifications of bishops. Verses 8-13 describe those of deacons: “Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for money; they must hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.” This passage includes the verse about possible women deacons: “Women must likewise be serious, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things.” I *Timothy*’s reference to presbyters, on the other hand, is cursory: “do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders” (4: 14).

One theory is that the offices of bishop and deacon originated in the Pauline or Hellenic churches, while that of presbyter or elder originated in the Judaistic churches, especially in Jerusalem. The two systems gradually link up and by the end of the first century a synthesis into three orders is more or less complete. Bishops are overseers and liturgical presiders, in conjunction with presbyters or elders, who form a kind of governing council. Deacons work closely with the bishop, act as episcopal agents, and have special responsibilities in pastoral, charitable, administrative work and the liturgy. Writers at the end of the first century, such as the authors of the *Didache* and *The Shepherd of Hermas* and Clement of Rome, refer to the link between bishop and deacon and the liturgical role of the deacon.

In the post-apostolic or “Ignatian” era, the “mono-episcopate” emerges, the “rule of the local church by a council of presbyters [...] over which one bishop presides.”¹² St. Ignatius of Antioch refers in his letters written at the beginning of the second century to fully-developed orders of bishop, presbyter and deacon. “[Deacons] are seen [by St. Ignatius] to have as integral a part in the ministry as the bishop and the presbyters: they are not an optional extra, but are mentioned first.”¹³ Deacons are officers or functionaries of the Church community, ministers of liturgy, word, charity and administration. Their direct association with the bishop is clear to Ignatius: “their *diakonia* is to carry

⁸ Edward P. Echlin, S.J., *The Deacon in the Church, Past and Future* (New York: Alba House, Society of St. Paul, 1971), 5. Echlin suggests that “[o]rdering was underway when Paul greeted the *episcopoi* and *diakonoi* at Philippi” (9); the role of Epaphroditus (*Phil.* 2: 25-30) shows the emergence of the diaconal function (10).

⁹ John Winjgaards, *Women Deacons in the Early Church: Historical Texts and Contemporary Debates* (Norwich: Canterbury Press; New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2002), 149.

¹⁰ Collins, *Deacons and the Church*, 73-75, 90.

¹¹ Collins, 99; see also Plater, 12. Evangelical writer Alexander Strauch, however, insists that the reference in this verse is to deacons’ wives (*The New Testament Deacon*, chapter 10).

¹² Barnett, 49.

¹³ Jill Pinnock, “The History of the Diaconate,” in Christine Hall, ed., *The Deacon’s Ministry* (Leominster: Gracewing, 1992), 12.

out the will of the bishop.”¹⁴ So is their liturgical role; for Ignatius, they are “deacons of the mysteries of Christ” at the eucharistic celebration¹⁵ – a role identified even more specifically in the writings of another second century writer, Justin Martyr:

*After the president has given thanks and all the people have shouted their assent, those whom we call deacons give to each one present to partake of the eucharistic bread; and to those who are absent they carry away a portion.*¹⁶

The Diaconate Flourishes

In the two centuries from the time of Ignatius to the Council of Nicaea, deacons are “vitaly important ministers of the Church,”¹⁷ a complementary order, not a subordinate one. People are ordained directly to the episcopate, the presbyterate or the diaconate, with all three seen as permanent. The deacon’s special relationship with the bishop is symbolized in the diaconal ordination rite where the bishop alone lays hands on the ordinand, whereas the college of priests join the bishop in the laying-on of hands for the presbyterate. The *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus (Rome, c. 215) notes that

*On ordaining the deacon, the bishop alone lays hands, because he is ordained not to the priesthood but to the ministry of the bishop, to carry out commands. He does not take part in the council of the clergy, but attends to duties and makes known to the bishop what is necessary...*¹⁸

The *Didascalia* of the Apostles (c. 250), a pastoral handbook for bishops, compares bishops to the high priests of Old Testament times, priests to Old Testament priests, and deacons to Levites.

*The deacon stands next to you like Christ and you should love him [...] Deacons should take bishops as models in their conduct. But they should work even harder than the bishop does [...] The deacon should be ready to obey and submit to the commands of the bishop. The deacon should work and spend himself wherever he may be sent to serve or to bear a message to someone.*¹⁹

Deacons have a major liturgical role and administrative and charitable duties. They act as administrative assistants to the bishop. They baptize. They have clear functions in the eucharist. They are even known – though rarely – to have presided at eucharistic celebrations.²⁰ They are ministers of charity, ministers to the sick and the aged. They may reconcile penitents. But, though ministers of the “Word,” they do not normally preach.²¹ They are sometimes placed in charge of small congregations. Some are elected bishops. “The third century was a period in which the dignity and importance of the deacon increased at the expense of the presbyter.”²²

¹⁴ Collins, *Deacons and the Church*, 106.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 108.

¹⁶ Quoted in Plater, 18-19.

¹⁷ Echlin, 29.

¹⁸ Quoted in Ormonde Plater, ed., *Historic Documents on the Diaconate* (Providence, RI: North American Association for the Diaconate, revised 1999), 1.

¹⁹ Winjaards, 151-153.

²⁰ Echlin speculates that Ignatius may on occasion have delegated eucharistic presidency to deacons (*The Deacon in the Church*, 22) and observes that the Council of Arles in 314 directed that the practice cease.

²¹ See Barnett, 80-83, who challenges the assertion of Echlin that deacons exercised a preaching ministry (76, 88, 103, 106).

²² Barnett, 71.

The following description of ministry in the early Church shows the relatively low profile of presbyters compared to deacons:

...the bishop is responsible for seeing to it that the congregation develops and grows and that the presbyters form with him a ruling group assisted by the deacons. At the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist, the local bishop inevitably presides, the deacons fulfilling their roles too [...] But it is the presbyters, who are by far the commonest in today's Church, who do not appear to "do" very much, apart from sitting there as elders.²³

The Diaconate – Ministry Open to Women?

There is considerable evidence to show that women are ordained deacons in the third through the seventh centuries; beyond that in the East, especially in Constantinople, as late as the 12th century; in Syria and Greece; but also in Gaul and possibly even Rome. The *Didascalia* explains the role of the female deacon for ministry among women, such as in baptisms and house visits:

The woman deacon should be honored by you as [the presence of] the Holy Spirit [...] Choose some people who most please you and institute them as deacon: a man for the administration of the many necessary tasks, but also a woman for ministry among women [...] You need the ministry of women deacons for many reasons.²⁴

The practice was not universal and some parts of the church, notably in the West and Egypt, were opposed to deaconesses. There has been disagreement among theologians as to whether these women were actually ordained. Some believe that they were not: for example, commenting on the *Didascalia*, Roman Catholic historian Aimé Georges Martimort argued that “deaconesses took no part in the liturgy [...] In no way could they be considered on the same level as deacons.”²⁵ German theologian and bishop Gerhard Müller maintained in a 2000 book that deaconesses were appointed offices like sub-deacons and lectors and not sacramentally ordained.²⁶ Others suggest that they received a form of ordination for a separate order of deaconesses but were not considered deacons. Still others argue that deaconesses were indeed female deacons. The latter view now seems to be widely accepted.²⁷

These female ministers are referred to as *diakonissa* in the canons of the Council of Nicaea (325). St. Basil of Caesarea (329-379), St. John Chrysostom (344-407) and St. Gregory of Nyssa (335-394) refer to women deacons.²⁸ Indeed, the *Apostolic Constitutions* from Syria in the late 4th century cite a prayer for episcopal ordination of a woman deacon which is a direct counterpart of that in the ordination of a male deacon.²⁹ The Council of Chalcedon (451) promulgates a canon regulating the

²³ Kenneth Stevenson, *The First Rites: Worship in the Early Church* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1989), 74-75.

²⁴ Winjgaards, *Women Deacons in the Early Church*, 151-152.

²⁵ Aimé Georges Martimort, *Deaconesses: An Historical Study* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 43. Martimort is cited approvingly by Alexander Strauch; from his evangelical perspective, ordination of women would be unbiblical and contrary to God's design (*The New Testament Deacon*, chapter 10). However, John Winjgaards emphatically rebuts Martimort's view.

²⁶ Gerhard Müller, *Priesthood and Diaconate* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002), 204 ff.

²⁷ For a summary of these points of view, see Kenan B. Osborne, O.F.M., *The Permanent Diaconate: Its History and Place in the Sacrament of Orders* (New York: Paulist Press, 2007), 170-174. Owen F. Cummings gives a less positive view of women deacons in *Deacons and the Church* (New York: Paulist Press, 2004), 42-43.

²⁸ Winjgaards, *Women Deacons in the Early Church*, 156-158.

²⁹ Quote in *ibid.*, 161.

ordination of deaconesses, who must be over forty years of age. The code of the Emperor Justinian I (529-564) includes a number of rules governing the ordination and discipline of women deacons. The Council of Trullo (692) reiterates the Chalcedonian rule of ordination of women deacons after age forty. A number of manuscripts dated between the eighth and fourteenth centuries reproduce ordination rites for women deacons.³⁰ They function liturgically and pastorally in parallel with their male counterparts. A leading Orthodox scholar, Kyriaki FitzGerald, records the sacramental ordination of women to the diaconate in various parts of the East, even during the Middle Ages, especially in monasteries.³¹

The Decline of the Diaconate

From the fourth century, things changed. In the post-Constantinian era, with tolerance, equality, and eventually official status for Christianity, the three orders of ministers underwent a radical transformation. Dioceses emerged and bishops presided over them instead of over local churches; presbyters replaced bishops in that role and at last gained the right to preside at the eucharist. In other words, bishops and presbyters switched functions so that bishops governed and presbyters presided. Deacons moved from assisting the bishop to assisting presbyters and lost their influence.

The Council of Nicaea (325) reflected a growing sacerdotalism, concurrent with a decline in the prestige of the diaconate. By the next century, St. Jerome (d 419) considered the diaconate “inferior” to the presbyterate. Furthermore, the church adopted the model of governance of the Roman Empire: the *cursus honorum*, a passage up the hierarchical ladder from one grade to another – and on that ladder the diaconate became classified as the lowest of three rungs. It actually took several centuries before ordination in succession to the diaconate, then the presbyterate, then the episcopate, became generalized into what we now know as “sequential” ordination. After the tenth century, however, the organic notion of the body of Christ was effectively replaced by clericalism and hierarchy and the diaconate ended up as a *pro forma* transition period to the priesthood. “The role of the deacon on the eve of the reformation was subordinate, temporary, and almost entirely liturgical.”³²

At the time of the Reformation, the Church of England emphatically proclaimed its intent to maintain the three-fold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons, on the rationale that

*It is euident unto all men, diligently readinge holye scripture, and auncient aucthours, that fro the Apostles tyme, there hathe bene these orders of Ministers in Christes church, Bisshoppes, Priestes, and Deacons...*³³

Indeed it did maintain them, but, alas, still clinging to the mediaeval concept that the diaconate was transitional, a mere stepping-stone to the “full” ministry – the priesthood. This is bluntly summed up in the ordinal of 1550, added to the First Prayer Book of King Edward VI (1549). The rite for the making of deacons concludes with a post-communion prayer, based on a prayer in the Sarum Pontifical, asking that those just ordained

³⁰ Ibid., 167-188.

³¹ The story of women deacons is summarized in Ormonde Plater, *Many Servants*, 21-27. See also Christine Hall, ed., *The Deacon's Ministry*, particularly Jill Pinnock, “The History of the Diaconate,” 14-21, and Kyriaki Fitzgerald, “A Commentary on the Diaconate in the Contemporary Orthodox Church,” 147-158; Edward Echlin, S.J., *The Deacon in the Church*, 62, 73; and Kyriaki Fitzgerald, *Women Deacons in the Orthodox Church: Called to Holiness and Ministry* (Brookline, MS: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1998).

³² Echlin, 91.

³³ *The First and Second Prayer Books of King Edward the Sixth* (London & Toronto: J.M. Dent; New York: E.P. Dutton, Everyman's Library 448, 1927), 292.

*may so wel use themselues in thys inferior offyce, that they may be found worthi to be called unto the higher ministeries in thy Church.*³⁴

There were exceptions. Leo the Great (440) and Gregory the Great (590) were in deacon's orders when elected to the papacy; so was the eleventh century archdeacon Hildebrand. The Venerable Bede was a deacon for eleven years. Alcuin, the great English scholar in the eighth century, was a deacon, as were St. Francis of Assisi in the thirteenth century and Cardinal Reginald Pole in the fifteenth. Nicholas Ferrar, who led the experimental Christian commune at Little Gidding in seventeenth century England, was a deacon. But they were rare exceptions. In the Western Church, although not in the Orthodox East, deacons were relegated to the side-lines. And this was to be their fate for over a thousand years.

By the mid-20th century, the diaconate was almost invisible. Transitional deacons, apprentice priests in their parishes or sometimes in their last year of seminary, for a few months or a year wore priest's stoles crossways, administered the chalice at communion – and, if their rectors were liturgically aware enough, might be allowed to read the Gospel. Their sights were firmly set on the “real” ordination, the one for professional ministry: the priesthood. Anglican parishes of a more catholic persuasion needed deacons (and sub-deacons) for a solemn eucharist or “high mass”; if they couldn't dredge up a real deacon, they dressed up a priest to look like one (this regrettable practice still continues, as does another, equally regrettable, practice of vesting a lay person as a “liturgical deacon”). The Canadian Prayer Book of 1959, a very conservative revision of the traditional *Book of Common Prayer*, unfortunately timed just when real liturgical reform was beginning, reflects the old assumptions about the diaconate. In its eucharistic rite, for example, the reference to “the Deacon or Priest who reads [the Gospel]” is the sum total of the deacon's role in the service.

Chapter II The Revival of the Diaconate

Two factors helped to resuscitate the moribund order of deacons. The first was the growing, ecumenical influence of the liturgical movement, which liberated Christian worship from the solo domination of the priest or pastor and brought into play the active participation of the entire community. For Anglicans, it meant going beyond the passive, reactive stance assumed for the congregation in *The Book of Common Prayer*. Here was fertile ground for the ancient liturgical role of the deacon. The other factor was the changing understanding of ordination, from a clerical caste which does things on behalf of the remainder of the Church to persons “to whom the community has entrusted a practical and symbolic leadership role.” In this view, as Deacon Maylanne Maybee expresses it,

*[B]ishops give symbolic focus and practical leadership to the apostolic Church in areas relating to oversight, unity, tradition, catholicism, and ecumenism. Presbyters give symbolic focus and practical leadership to the local, gathered Church in its life of worship, fellowship, and reconciliation. In the same way, deacons are needed to give symbolic focus to the “sent forth” Church in its mission of service, proclamation, peace, and justice-making.*³⁵

³⁴ Ibid., 302.

³⁵ Maylanne Maybee, “The State of the Diaconate in the Anglican Church of Canada,” in Richard Leggett, ed., *A Companion to the Waterloo Declaration. Commentary and Essays on Lutheran-Anglican Relations in Canada* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1999), 104-105.

Of course, neither of these factors was “new.” The full participation of the worshipping community and the symbolic role of ordained ministers within that community were practices of the ancient Church in which the diaconate had thrived. The recovery of these practices set the stage for, among other things, the return of the deacon.

At first, there were several inconclusive efforts to renew the diaconate. For example, in the 1950s there were a number of “perpetual deacons,” especially in the Episcopal Church in the United States. They usually functioned as unpaid curates, their duties ranging from genuine pastoral work to merely administering a chalice at communion. Some used this as a back door to the priesthood at a time of shortage of clergy. The real stimulus to the revival of the order of deacons was the Second Vatican Council, which, through the Constitution of the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1964, approved the restoration of the diaconate in the Roman Catholic Church as a permanent vocation, open to married men. The *motu proprio* of Paul VI in 1967, *Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem*, effectively revived the diaconate in the Latin West after a slumber of a millennium. By 1999 there were over 27,600 deacons in the Roman Catholic Church world-wide. In 2014, the Roman Catholic Church in the United States reported having some 18,700 deacons, of whom 93% were married.³⁶

The Anglican Communion

In the Anglican Communion, the Lambeth Conference as early as 1958 made a tentative approach to renewing the diaconate:

*The Conference recommends that each province of the Anglican Communion shall consider whether the office of Deacon shall be restored to its primitive place as a distinctive order in the Church, instead of being regarded as a probationary period for the priesthood.*³⁷

Lambeth 1968, while advising retention of the transitional diaconate, took a strong stand in favour of the distinctive diaconate:

*The Conference recommends [...that] the diaconate, combining service of others with liturgical functions, be open to (i) men and women remaining in secular occupations (ii) full-time church workers (iii) those selected for the priesthood.*³⁸

Lambeth 1978 urged the churches to ordain women deacons. Lambeth 1988 continued the momentum:

*We need to recover the diaconate as an order complementary to the order of priesthood rather than as a merely transitional order which it is at present. We should ensure that such a diaconate does not threaten the ministry of the laity but seeks to equip and further it. Such a diaconate, furthermore, would serve to renew the diakonia of the whole Church: laity, deacons, priests and bishops.*³⁹

The Episcopal Church in the United States paid early and serious attention to the diaconate. A Center for the Diaconate was founded in 1974. It was succeeded in 1986 by the North American Association for the Diaconate (NAAD), called since 2010 the Association for Episcopal Deacons, or AED. It actively promoted the order through education, publicity and fellowship among deacons. Its

³⁶ *A Portrait of the Permanent Diaconate: A Report for the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2013-2014* (Center for Applied Research on the Apostolate, Georgetown University, May 2014).

³⁷ *Historic Documents on the Diaconate*, 5.

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

conferences and impressive list of publications had a major influence on the renewal of the diaconate in the U.S.A. and eventually in Canada and elsewhere in the Anglican Communion. In the light of these developments, the 1998 Lambeth Conference sent a positive message on the diaconate:

*Where deacons exercise their special ministry in the Church, they do so by illuminating and holding up the servant ministry of the whole Church and calling its members to that ministry [...] The re-establishment of the diaconate [...] liberates bishops and presbyters to exercise their complementary and distinctive tasks.*⁴⁰

By 2014, there were 3,000 deacons in the Episcopal Church, with over two hundred more in formation.⁴¹

Ambivalence in the Church of England

However, support in the Anglican Communion for the renewed diaconate has been far from unanimous. A report for the Church of England in 1974 (just when the Episcopal Church's Center for the Diaconate was established) actually recommended abolition of the diaconate, on the grounds that it had no exclusive functions and would interfere with lay ministry.⁴² (Discussions on the diaconate in the Church of England have always had to take into account the strength of the order of Lay Readers in that country.) This attitude was reflected in the 1980 *Alternative Service Book* of the Church of England, where deacons are almost invisible: there is no mention of the deacon reading the Gospel or giving the Dismissal, even in the contemporary eucharistic rites. However, the 1974 recommendation went nowhere – fortunately.

The Church of England finally admitted women to the diaconate in 1987, but many of the new deacons were women waiting for the Church of England to accept women priests, which it did in 1992. The vocational diaconate did not seem to have taken hold. This is evident in the 2000 *Book of Common Worship* of the Church of England, where references to deacons are almost as rare as in the *Alternative Service Book* published twenty years earlier. The 2000 Book grudgingly allows that “in some traditions the ministry of the deacon at Holy Communion has included some of the following elements” (such as reading the Gospel, intercessions, preparation of the table, etc.). It goes on to say that “the deacon’s liturgical ministry provides an appropriate model for the ministry of an assisting priest, a Reader, or another episcopally authorized minister...” Reflecting the C of E’s preoccupation with Lay Readers, the Book adds that the president may “delegate the leadership of all or parts of the Gathering and the Liturgy of the Word to a deacon, Reader or other authorized lay person.”⁴³ This is hardly a ringing endorsement of the diaconate in the Church of England!

However, a seminal study in 2001 by a Working Party of the House of Bishops, called *At such a time as this – a renewed diaconate in the Church of England*, argued that “there is distinctive but not exclusive ministry for a renewed diaconate.”⁴⁴ The Dioceses of Portsmouth and Salisbury actively promoted the diaconate. In 2003 the latter diocese issued its own report, *The Distinctive Diaconate*, by a committee of its Board of Ministry, chaired by Rosalind Brown, principal author of *At such a*

⁴⁰ “The Diaconate as a Distinct Order of Ministry,” in *The Official Report of the Lambeth Conference, 1998* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1999), 203.

⁴¹ Source: Deacon Jo Weber, Association for Episcopal Deacons, July 2014.

⁴² *Deacons in the Church*, Church of England ACCM Working Party (London: CIO, 1974).

⁴³ *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England* (London: Church House Publishing, 2000), 158-159.

⁴⁴ *For such a time as this – a renewed diaconate in the Church of England*, Working Party of the House of Bishops, Church of England (London: Church House Publishing, 2001), Chapter 7.

time as this. It set out a plan, both theoretical and practical, for implementing the vision of the 2001 report.⁴⁵ In 2007, another Church of England study, *The Mission and Ministry of the Whole Church* (referred to by Bishop Hardwick in the Foreword to the present study), called for the diaconate to be taken more seriously: its theological framework was already in place but “has gone largely unrecognized;” the distinctive diaconate should be encouraged, especially for some lay Readers; and the transitional diaconate should be extended beyond a year.⁴⁶ Interestingly, an editorial commentary in the *Church Times*, entitled “Deacons, not doormats,” expressed some scepticism about both this latest report and *At such a time as this*, and questioned the value of ordination for diaconal ministry. But the editorial did challenge the transitional diaconate and welcomed the idea of “diaconal recognition” for Readers.⁴⁷ However, visiting England in 2011, the author found that Church of England clergy expressed surprise that he was “still” a deacon and not yet in priest’s orders!

And in Canada...

In the Anglican Church of Canada things moved hesitantly. A first wave of ordinations for the distinctive diaconate occurred in the 1970s, when some dioceses in the ecclesiastical Provinces of Rupert’s Land (Rupert’s Land, Brandon and Qu’Appelle) and British Columbia (New Westminster, Caledonia, Cariboo, and Kootenay) established diaconal programs. The Province of Ontario considered the idea but ended up instead with a moratorium on the vocational diaconate, which meant the bishops would only ordain transitional deacons. There was no activity at all in the Province of Canada (Quebec and east). However, the programs in western Canada faltered after the first few years. In some cases a change in episcopal leadership resulted in a reluctance or even refusal to ordain more deacons. Some supposedly vocational deacons were ordained to the priesthood, undercutting the rationale for the vocational diaconate and renewing suspicion that it was a back door to the priesthood.

Fortunately, attitudes soon began to change. The 1986 General Synod recommended that “the renewal of the diaconate as an order with an integrity of its own be considered in the context of ... the baptismal ministry of the whole people of God.”⁴⁸ The 1989 General Synod approved guidelines for the restoration of a distinctive diaconate and a second wave of ordinations began in the 1990s. The Ontario bishops reversed direction and the Diocese of Toronto in particular launched an active program for deacons. The Province of Canada did the same after 1996 and diaconal programs began in the dioceses of Montreal, Eastern Newfoundland & Labrador, and Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island. In the Province of British Columbia & Yukon, diaconal programs recovered their momentum; by 2000, the Diocese of New Westminster had the fastest-growing program in Canada. A sign of progress in the Canadian diaconate was the lifting of another moratorium in 2000, this one by Archbishop David Crawley of Kootenay.

...I put a moratorium on further ordinations to the diaconate until such time as a clearer picture of its parameters emerged. [...] It troubles me greatly that we as a church are not as widely and deeply involved in organized ministries to the community as we ought to be. I have come to believe that is partly so, because we have allowed the diaconate, whose members personify that ministry to and in the community of faith, largely to vanish from our

⁴⁵ *The Distinctive Diaconate: A Report to the Board of Ministry, The Diocese of Salisbury* (Salisbury: Sarum College Press, 2003).

⁴⁶ *The Mission and Ministry of the Whole Church: Biblical, theological and contemporary perspectives* (London: General Synod, 2007); quoted in the *Church Times*, 31 August 2007.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁸ *A Plan to Restore the Diaconate in the Anglican Church of Canada*. General Synod Committee on Ministry (Toronto: Anglican Church of Canada, 1989), 4.

*midst. We need more visible reminders that of the titles of our three orders of ministry – Bishop, Priest, and Deacon – deacon (or in English, ‘servant’) was the only one Jesus used to describe himself. [...] vocations to the diaconate, training for the diaconate, and the ministries of deacons will be absolutely focused on being servants in, to and for the wider community, and on the vigorous and unrelenting calling of the whole community of our faithful to that service.*⁴⁹

Rupert’s Land province, a leader in the diaconate in the 1970s, subsequently backed off, despite a favourable report on the diaconate by its committee on ministry in the late 1980s. By the end of the 1990s, no diocese in the province had an active diaconal program and the only vocational deacons were those remaining from the first wave of ordinations in the 1970s and 80s. Of the three dioceses in the civil Province of Saskatchewan, only Qu’Appelle explored the distinctive diaconate. In the 1970s, several men and women had been ordained deacons, including the author. In the 1980s, however, there was no consistent follow-up or policy on the diaconate in the diocese. Some candidates, specifically ordained for the vocational diaconate, became priests a few years later, and this effectively put an end to the program in the diocese. In the 1990s, when Qu’Appelle was at the leading edge of locally-ordained ministry, its official material at first only referred to priests. The option of ordination as deacon was added later to the documentation on the program, but only theoretically, for there was no real encouragement to pursue the diaconate. It is hardly a surprise that no candidates came forward until 2000. When they did, however, it was with an enthusiasm and commitment which obliged the diocese to seriously re-examine a form of ordained ministry it had virtually allowed to lapse for twenty years. The diaconal program was revived and nine women and two men were ordained deacon in Qu’Appelle between 2001 and 2012.

With the benefit of hindsight, we can see that the first wave of programs for a distinctive diaconate in Canada in the 1970s and early 1980s lacked depth and sustainability. These were launched, with commendable enthusiasm, when the diaconal movement was spreading in the Anglican Communion. But too often they were *ad hoc* in nature, were overly dependent on the interest, or lack thereof, of individual bishops, and did not benefit from coherent training and formation programs. There was insufficient education in the parishes about the purpose of the diaconate and frequently a lack of support and understanding from the presbyterate. Often deacons were viewed – and on occasion viewed themselves – as clerical assistants in parishes rather than as ministers of service linking the church with the world. As a result, many deacons ordained in the “first wave” found themselves isolated, relegated to an exceptional or experimental status instead of being seen as prototypes for a renewed and expanding form of ministry.

The second wave of diaconal programs, dating from the mid-1990s, was much more coherent and grounded in a solid theology of baptism and ordination. Canadian deacons, and the Anglican Church of Canada at large, had learned from the example of diaconate in the Episcopal Church (and in the Roman Catholic Church) and had benefited for twenty years from the informational and educational programs of NAAD. Canadian bishops looked with renewed interest at the diaconate and, when they began diaconal programs, usually did so based on wide consultation and employing a careful process of discernment, selection, formation and training, as well as systematic follow-up after ordination.

In 1999, fifteen Canadian deacons attended the biennial conference of NAAD in Northfield, Minnesota, where they decided that a meeting of Canadian deacons should be convened the following year. In 2000, this historic, first-ever conference of Canadian deacons met in Winnipeg. Forty were present, one-third of the 120 deacons then known in Canada. Reflecting the vigour of the existing

⁴⁹ Archbishop’s Charge to the Synod of the Diocese of Kootenay, 2000.

diaconal programs, there was strong representation from the ecclesiastical provinces of British Columbia & Yukon, Ontario, and Canada. From the vast Province of Rupert's Land, however, came only one deacon – the author!⁵⁰ The conference concluded with a unanimous decision to form an association of Canadian deacons affiliated with the North American Association for the Diaconate (now the Association for Episcopal Deacons). This was the genesis of the Association of Anglican Deacons in Canada (AADC), which was recognized by NAAD (AED) as its Canadian affiliate, arranged for joint memberships, and now holds conferences in off-years of the triennial AED conferences. Four of these have been held, in Charlottetown in 2004, Vancouver in 2008, London (ON) in 2011, and Halifax in 2014 – the latter attended by 55 deacons from twelve dioceses.

By late 2014, AADC estimated that there were 340 vocational deacons in Canada, of whom about 300 were active, plus 37 diaconal candidates. Two-thirds of them were women. By then, every diocese in Canada had deacons, with the sole exceptions of the Dioceses of Saskatoon (which, however, planned to discuss the diaconate at a future synod) and Saskatchewan – the latter, like the Church of England, has an active lay readers' program. Some dioceses had very few deacons: one in Central Newfoundland, two in Western Newfoundland, and three each in Algoma, Athabasca, and Moosonee. On the other hand, the diaconate was thriving in other dioceses: 21 in Eastern Newfoundland & Labrador, 36 in Huron, 22 in the new indigenous jurisdiction of Mishamikoweesh, 36 in New Westminster, 18 in Niagara, and 45 in Toronto. New Westminster also had the large number of 14 candidates for the diaconate.⁵¹ By 2014, two British Columbia deacons – both of them directors of deacons in their dioceses – had been appointed as archdeacons, the first such cases in Canada. (Deacons are bemused that almost all Anglican archdeacons are priests, not deacons! The Anglican Communion should consider adopting the Orthodox Church's title of archpriest.)

To have or not to have Deacons: A Roman Catholic Case Study⁵²

We have emphasized the crucial importance of Vatican II in the revival of the diaconate, not only in the Roman Catholic Church but in the Anglican Communion and elsewhere. Yet Roman Catholics, like Anglicans, have not all been convinced of the merits of the vocational diaconate. The bishops of the Canadian dioceses west of Winnipeg made a decision in the 1970s not to institute a diaconal program, unlike their counterparts in most of the rest of Canada. Emphasis was placed instead on lay ministry formation, and it was believed that the diaconate might detract from this. According to one Archbishop of Regina, an added factor was that women could be included in the lay program, whereas they could not for the diaconate.⁵³ As a result, until the 2000s there were no Roman Catholic deacons in Saskatchewan (although there were some Eastern Rite Ukrainian Catholic deacons). Even by 2014, there were still only two active deacons in the Archdiocese of Regina, two in the Diocese of Saskatoon, and one in the Diocese of Prince Albert, but, in the absence of local diaconal formation programs, they had been ordained elsewhere or exceptionally.

In the early 1990s, the Diocese of Calgary was the first to break ranks with the policy not to have permanent deacons; Edmonton was next; St. Paul (in northern Alberta) has had one cohort of deacons; Vancouver started a program in 2012. In 2013, Most Rev. Daniel Bohan, Archbishop of

⁵⁰ Dioceses represented were: British Columbia, New Westminster, Kootenay, Cariboo, Caledonia, Yukon; Toronto, Ontario, Huron, Algoma, Moosonee; Montreal, Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island, Eastern Newfoundland & Labrador; and... Qu'Appelle.

⁵¹ Source: Deacon Jacquie Bouthéon, Association of Anglican Deacons in Canada, October 2014. See Appendix B for the complete list of Canadian dioceses.

⁵² We appreciate the assistance of Dr. Brett Salkeld, archdiocesan theologian of the Archdiocese of Regina, with this section.

⁵³ Conversation between the author and Archbishop Charles Halpin.

Regina, announced his intention to begin a diaconal formation program and hired a lay theologian as ecumenical officer, with the additional responsibility of implementing the program. Ten candidates, ranging in age from 40 to 65, comprised the first intake of the four-year program in the fall of 2014. They are to attend ten weekend courses each year, in most cases accompanied by their wives.⁵⁴

The Archbishop encouraged his counterparts in the two other Saskatchewan dioceses to follow his example. Bishop Albert Thénevot of Prince Albert responded promptly with a diaconal program. In an interesting twist of fate, the director of the program is a former Anglican priest from the Anglican Diocese of Saskatchewan, also based in Prince Albert, and is the first married priest in the history of the Diocese of Prince Albert.⁵⁵ Ironically, as we have just seen, Saskatchewan is the only diocese in the Anglican Church of Canada not to have any diaconal program or plans for one!

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon showed itself more reticent. Historically, there had been an emphasis in this diocese on lay ministry, coupled with scepticism about the diaconate. In 2013, Bishop Don Bolen announced a consultation across the diocese to discern whether there was a willingness to proceed with the vocational diaconate. He later said:

*I tested the waters in a few places on this question, and had a fairly good sense that this would be a highly contested issue in our diocese, with strong feelings on both sides of the question. In prayer I knew we had to broaden the discussion, seeking out options that would move us away from a decision that would polarize, and letting the Spirit assist us in finding a way forward. A diaconal discernment committee was formed, and the 12 members represented very divergent views at the outset, reflecting the diversity of opinion existing within the diocese.*⁵⁶

The committee submitted its report in July 2014, recommending that, in the context of a lay formation program, “the diocese move forward in discerning the permanent diaconate with those who feel called to serve those on the peripheries of church and society” and, among other things, that “the liturgical ministry of deacons be a celebration of their active ministry of service in the community.” The report added that “wherever possible, the diocese participates faithfully and prudently in local, national and international conversations about the possibility of opening the permanent diaconate to women as well as men.”⁵⁷

In September 2014, Bishop Bolen accepted the committee’s recommendations to proceed with a permanent diaconate. However, reflecting the evident division in the diocese, he chose to do so cautiously.

We heard from many who felt that we should move towards a diaconate, and considerable enthusiasm for a vision of a diaconate tied strongly to service of those most in need. This vision for the diaconate begins with a demonstrated commitment to ministry of active service, out of which flows a liturgical ministry that sacramentalizes the service to which all are called. In other words, we heard that the liturgical and preaching ministries of a possible diaconate in the diocese should flow out of that service, and not the other way around [...]

He went on to address the most divisive issue – the ordination of women as deacons:

⁵⁴ *Prairie Messenger*, 27 August 2014, 6.

⁵⁵ See: www.padiocese.ca/our-diocese19/permanent-diaconate

⁵⁶ Most Rev. Don Bolen, “Permanent Deacons in the Diocese of Saskatoon” – www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/diaconate

⁵⁷ Recommendation of the Diaconal Discernment Committee to Bishop Don Bolen, July 17, 2014.

We heard a strong reservation from a significant minority of people (across all vocations) about proceeding with a permanent diaconate that cannot include women. While everyone was clear that we belong to a universal church, and that we have no authority to move in that direction, as the local bishop I was encouraged by many to contribute, in an ecclesially appropriate and responsible way, to national and international dialogue on the possibility of a permanent diaconate which would be open to women.⁵⁸

The bishop said that the program would take at least two years to implement, that discernment and formation would be done on an individual basis, and that three committees would be struck to examine the ramifications of both lay and diaconal ministry.

Chapter III The Diaconate Today

Defining Our Terms

At this point, it may be helpful to review terminology. A widely-accepted term is “transitional” deacon, that is, a person in deacon’s orders for a usually brief, *pro forma* time on the way to ordination to the priesthood. We have also mentioned the “perpetual” deacon, the not-very-successful experiment to revive the diaconate in the Episcopal Church in the 1950s. The term “permanent” deacon was next used to delineate the continuing diaconal minister from the transitional variety (and continues to be the preferred Roman Catholic usage). The appellation “vocational” deacon then became a more accepted term, but it is giving way to “distinctive deacon” or just plain “deacon,” on the grounds that it is *transitional* deacons who should be considered the exception to the norm.⁵⁹ There are also “stipendiary” deacons who earn their living through this ministry. Stipendiary deacons are rare; one is Maylanne Maybee, a long-time staff person for the Anglican Church of Canada and now Principal of the Centre for Christian Studies in Winnipeg. Most deacons (other than the transitional brand) are “non-stipendiary;” in other words they earn their living outside the church structure, which is, as we shall see, one of the most powerful signs of the contemporary diaconate.

The Deacon as Symbol

Having looked at what deacons did in the early church and what they did not do afterwards, let us look at what deacons can, could, and should do now. But we must be careful with the word “do.” As James Barnett put it, the diaconate is first and foremost a *symbol*:

The primary function of [...] the deacon is to be something, not to do something [...] Deacons [...] are not ordained essentially in order that they may perform the distinctive functions of their order but to hold up diakonia as central to all Christian ministry.⁶⁰

When Bishop John Howe, later Secretary-General of the Anglican Communion, promoted the diaconate on the Lambeth agenda in 1968, he cautioned against “a functional approach – that of setting up a diaconate to relieve a particular need. Instead, restoration should be based on ‘what the

⁵⁸ “Permanent Deacons in the Diocese of Saskatoon.” See also “Diaconal discernment announced in Saskatoon,” *Prairie Messenger*, September 24, 2014, 6.

⁵⁹ Maylanne Maybee points out that “[a]djectives such as ‘vocational,’ ‘permanent’ or ‘perpetual’ suggest that the norm is a diaconate to which people are ordained as a condition of their priesthood” (“The State of the Diaconate in the Anglican Church of Canada,” 97).

⁶⁰ *The Diaconate: A Full and Equal Order*, 140-141.

diaconate is and what deacons are for'.⁶¹ And this, says Barnett, is that “[t]he deacon above all epitomizes within his or her office the ministry Christ has given to his Church, the servant ministry to which we are all called and commissioned in our Baptism.”⁶²

Re-assessing the Traditional View of Servant Ministry

As noted above, recent scholarship has broadened the meaning of *diakonia* from “service” to “ministry” and to include not only obvious forms of direct service but much more: messenger or communicator, agent, “go-between.” An Orthodox bishop and theologian contends that “*diakonia* involves not only mercy, justice, and prophecy, but also worship, upbuilding the church, royal priesthood, and prayer and intercession.”⁶³ John Collins challenged the long-accepted interpretation of biblical and early church references to the diaconate as meaning humble, even menial, service. In his view, a misreading of biblical language, as in the story of the commissioning of the Seven in *Acts* 6, resulted in “social work becoming the defining activity of deacons” in some parts of the church after the Reformation,⁶⁴ for example, the mid-nineteenth century Lutheran introduction of deacons and deaconesses in Germany. Across Germany, the Nordic countries and Holland, the German word *Diakonie* “became known ... as the church’s form of social service.”⁶⁵ Its legacy to this day has been far too restrictive an understanding of the diaconate, for “in some sectors of the modern diaconal movement this is precisely how the modern deacon’s identity has been defined.”⁶⁶ Deacons, says Collins, were and are much more: in the early Church they were, for example, “executives of the corporate leadership,” relational figures, “agents of the church.”⁶⁷ The work of John Collins has, as might be expected, generated much debate.⁶⁸ However, it has definitely changed the understanding and the scope of the diaconate, as shown in the 1996 Anglican-Lutheran *Hanover Report*. The report summed up the diaconate by saying

*In the world in which the early church lived, diakonia seems to have referred to the service of a 'go-between' or agent who carries out activities for another [...] Diakonia seems more concerned with apostleship than with our present understanding of the diaconate. [...] Diaconal ministers are called to be agents of the church in interpreting and meeting needs, hopes, and concerns within church and society.*⁶⁹

Rosalind Brown adopted this broader view of the diaconate, referring to it as “enabling people to worship, providing pastoral care and proclaiming the gospel. Deacons are... role models and catalysts for the baptismal ministry of all Christians.”⁷⁰ In the words of the 2001 Church of England report *For such a time as this*, diaconal ministry is “liturgical, pastoral and catechetical,”⁷¹ “the

⁶¹ Cited in Ormonde Plater, *Many Servants*, 91.

⁶² Barnett, 138.

⁶³ Paulos Mar Gregorios, *The Meaning and Nature of Diakonia* (Geneva; World Council of Churches, 1988), quoted in Ormonde Plater, *Many Servants*, xii.

⁶⁴ *Deacons and the Church*, 50.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 127-131.

⁶⁸ See, for example, *The Distinctive Diaconate: A Report to the Board of Ministry, The Diocese of Salisbury*, 24-27; and Rosalind Brown, *Being a Deacon Today: Exploring a distinctive ministry in the Church and in the world* (Norwich: Canterbury Press; Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2005), 13-14.

⁶⁹ *The Diaconate as Ecumenical Opportunity. The Hanover Report of the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission*, published for the Anglican Consultative Council and the Lutheran World Federation (London: Anglican Communion Publications, 1996), 7,16.

⁷⁰ Rosalind Brown, *Being a Deacon Today*, xi.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, xiii.

deacon is a person on a mission, an ambassador or messenger, making connections, building bridges, faithfully delivering a mandate.”⁷² The 2007 Church of England report, *The Mission and Ministry of the Whole Church*, obviously influenced by Collins’ research, stated that the ancient function of the deacon as a

responsible agent [...] who carried out duties on behalf of the bishop [...] has been eclipsed in recent decades by a rhetorical appeal to “humble service” on the part of deacons. It has not always been clear that, while deacons, like all Christians and all ministers, are indeed servants, they are servants first of the Lord who sends, then of the Church through whom he sends, but not servants in the sense of being at the disposal of all and sundry.

Deacons in Action

There is a wide variety of ways in which deacons function, once ordained. Their activity may be diocesan or parochial or both or neither. Many have a ministry of direct service, pastoral, social or charitable in nature – as hospital or prison or institutional visitors, or working with the poor, with minority groups, with the disabled, with advocacy organizations. Deacons may have a teaching ministry, or be involved in communications. They may undertake specific duties in a parish: Christian education, youth work, home visiting, taking the reserved sacrament to shut-ins, administrative or organizational or liturgical duties.

Deacons may preach, although there has been some debate about this. While it appears that deacons did not normally preach in the early Church, Episcopal deacon and author Ormonde Plater considers this to be an “antiquarian attitude” today. True, he says, bishops and priests are the “normal preachers,” but deacons may “preach by invitation, not by order”⁷³ and are often licensed to do so by the bishop.⁷⁴ Rosalind Brown, from the perspective of the Church of England, where the order of Readers includes preaching among its roles, says that while “regular preaching during the principal Sunday services is not necessarily integral to the ministry of deacons [...] nevertheless deacons may be called upon to preach at pastoral services and therefore it is appropriate that all deacons be trained to preach”⁷⁵ – for example, at baptisms, weddings and funerals or services in institutions.

It is important to note that although, as we shall see, deacons exercise much of their ministry outside “the Church,” they should be firmly “rooted in the local church, living out with the people there... a life that reflects the love of Christ.”⁷⁶ Deacons are not meant to be freelancers. Their role in a parish context is one of assisting, not presiding, although this does not preclude – indeed it presupposes – “leadership.” Ormonde Plater said that “deacons serve best when they dare, when they speak out and act out, when they get themselves and others in trouble — even when they arouse the mob.”⁷⁷ When preaching, for example, “[d]eacons are the chief aggravators in the congregation — or they should be — and they don’t have to worry about pleasing people.”⁷⁸ Amidst all the variety of diaconal ministry there are three common threads for most deacons.

⁷² Ibid., 14.

⁷³ “Through the Dust,” in *Diakoneo*, Vol. 28, #4, 2006 (Providence, RI: North American Association for the Diaconate), 16.

⁷⁴ The ordinal in the Canadian *Book of Common Prayer* (1959) states that one of the roles of the deacon is “to preach, if he be admitted thereto by the Bishop;” this is omitted, however, in *The Book of Alternative Services* (1985) and in the Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer* (1977).

⁷⁵ *Being a Deacon Today*, 80-81.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 3.

⁷⁷ *Many Servants*, 61.

⁷⁸ “Through the Dust.”

Worship

The first is **liturgical**, even sacramental. As we shall see in Part B, *it is essential that deacons fulfil, and be clearly seen to fulfil, their liturgical roles, especially at the Eucharist*: assisting the presiding celebrant; proclaiming the Gospel; sometimes leading the Prayers of the People and the confession; inviting the people to share the peace; preparing the table; administering communion; coordinating ablutions; and giving the Dismissal. The proclamation of the Gospel is the high point both of the ministry of the Word and of the deacon's role in the Eucharist. "The key to the deacons' incarnational ministry is their liturgical function in bringing the book of the Gospels into the assembly."⁷⁹ "[The] proclamation of the Gospel in the Eucharist [...] is a vitally important liturgical act, the very heart of the ministry of the Word."⁸⁰ Significantly, while the presbyter (or bishop) convenes the assembly at the beginning of the eucharistic liturgy, it is the deacon who disperses it in the Dismissal, sending the faithful "to love and serve the Lord [...] over the church threshold and out into the world."⁸¹ As Rosalind Brown puts it, "[t]here is no diaconal ministry without service in the Eucharist where the deacon, with others, enables the church to express its identity as God's people."⁸²

The diaconal role is not limited to the Eucharist. Deacons may officiate at Morning and Evening Prayer. They assist the bishop in episcopal liturgies: ordination, confirmation, blessing of the oils. Reflecting their involvement in "the world," they have a role in pastoral liturgies – baptisms, marriages and funerals – paying special attention to occasional worshippers.⁸³ The liturgies of Holy Week and Easter assign major duties to the deacon: on Palm Sunday, reading the Gospel of the Liturgy of the Palms; on Good Friday, leading the Solemn Intercession; at the Easter Vigil, carrying the paschal candle and singing the *Exsultet*. Sometimes the deacon acts as organizer or master of ceremonies or announcer, or, as in the Orthodox Churches, has major functions in prayer and music.

These liturgical roles are not incidental or peripheral; they are crucial for both the deacon and the assembly – not because deacons do useful things in the services (although they do), but because they are primarily a symbol, an icon. "The point is," says Ormonde Plater, "that a deacon, as a major performer in the assembly, plays a vital role in the complete action of the assembly by acting out messages of diaconal ministry. This performance does not take place in isolation, for the deacon works as part of a **team** [our emphasis] of actors."⁸⁴

Lay Ministry

Clearly the liturgical role of the deacon is only valid if it symbolizes a ministry in conjunction with others within and without the worshipping community. The team approach mentioned above with respect to liturgy is a hallmark of the diaconate in general: "diaconal ministry... is always collaborative, and the relationship of the deacon to all the other members of the church is a litmus test of that person's diaconal ministry."⁸⁵ And so the second thread is that deacons **enable lay ministry**. Indeed, this should be one of their primary functions, "playing a part in meshing together all the

⁷⁹ Bishop Michael Stancliffe, "The Diaconate" (preparation paper for the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation, 1999), 5.

⁸⁰ John E. Booty, *The Servant Church: Diaconal Ministry and the Episcopal Church* (Wilton, CT: Morehouse Publishing, 1982), 67.

⁸¹ Rosalind Brown, *Being a Deacon Today*, 55.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 6.

⁸³ See *ibid.*, 56-59, for a good discussion of this pastoral/liturgical function.

⁸⁴ *Many Servants*, 131.

⁸⁵ Rosalind Brown, 6.

ministries of all the baptized.”⁸⁶ Some observers have noted a change in emphasis in the diaconate from being a “provider of service” to being a “promoter of service.”⁸⁷ And this means searching, co-opting, pushing, reconciling, leading, stimulating, organizing, encouraging lay members of the assembly to fulfil active functions in the liturgy and the community. Examples are recruiting, training and coordinating readers, greeters, servers, intercessors and communion ministers for worship; participating in teams of hospital or home visitors; prison and institutional ministry; representing the parish in outreach programs and liaison with community or advocacy organizations. Reports on the diaconate emphasize the relationship between deacons and lay ministry. *The Distinctive Diaconate* of the Diocese of Salisbury includes a chapter on “The relationship of the diaconate to lay ministers.”⁸⁸

The Wider Community

A third thread of the diaconate is the role as **agent** or **ambassador** in the so-called secular world, acting as a go-between for the Church and society at large, functioning concurrently within the ecclesial community and outside it. Of course, this is part of the ministry of all the baptized. But deacons have a special identity in this area because they are *ordained*. Deacons (assuming that they are non-stipendiary) can discreetly make it known in their secular employment or in a social context that they are ordained ministers. This may not result in any specific pastoral activity. It should not be a pretext for recruiting parishioners. But at the very least it means the deacon is a living, walking symbol for the Church outside its own membership. And this places an onus on the deacon with respect to his or her lifestyle and his or her behaviour in the workplace. Thus, whereas the ministry of the presbyter is *primarily* to the gathered community, that of the deacon must be operative *both* inside and outside it and act as a bridge between the two – which is why the deacon should retain a base in a parish or other church community.

*The deacon occupies a frontier post, making sense of terms like work-based ministry, for the deacon is ordained for ministry in both Church and world and is a sign that the two cannot be polarised.*⁸⁹

*Deacons are supposed to be the bridge between the church and the world. As such, they bring their everyday knowledge to an institution that frequently is used as a retreat from the world [...] Deacons can help one side understand the other, through their life experience, and their decision to be one of the ordered members of the church.*⁹⁰

Discernment, Formation and Ordination

The process of identifying candidates for the diaconate and then, once approved, of following through with their training and then ordination, varies a great deal between dioceses. Some have quite elaborate, formal programs, requiring several years. In others, the process may be shorter and more informal. Much depends on the preferences of individual bishops. Because of this variety, it is not possible to do justice to the subject here. Instead, we reproduce in an appendix some of the material from the diaconal program of the Diocese of Toronto, Anglican Church of Canada, which is both extensive and thorough. There, as in a number of other dioceses, a director of deacons supervises the discernment process, subsequent formation, and preparation for ordination; then handles follow-up,

⁸⁶ Elaine Bardwell, “The Pastoral Role of the Deacon,” in Christine Hall, ed., *The Deacon's Ministry*, 63.

⁸⁷ For example, Ormonde Plater, 197.

⁸⁸ 73-76.

⁸⁹ Stancliffe, “The Diaconate,” 6.

⁹⁰ W. Keith McCoy, *The Deacon as a Para-Cleric* (Providence, RI: North American Association for the Diaconate, Monograph Series No. 9, 1998), 5.

assessment and supervision of the deacons. Toronto's program is to be commended as a model. Like other such programs in many Anglican and Roman Catholic dioceses, it requires three years or more.⁹¹

Discernment and Acceptance

Experience has shown that candidates for the diaconate have usually been active members of the Church for a fairly long time, and are already exercising a form of diaconal ministry and leadership within the church community, or outside it, or both. The discernment process for locally-ordained ministers is often undertaken through a parish discernment group. Some cautionary words are in order:

- Candidates for the diaconate should be screened for both personal motivation and wide parish support. Their vocation should not, from either point of view, appear to be a new form of *cursus honorum*, moving upwards through the ranks of lay offices to be rewarded by the accolade of ordination. Nor should it be satisfying a desire for authority, or prestige, or liturgical visibility. Nor should a candidate be pushed forward by the incumbent of the parish for reasons of personal favouritism or vague notions that “it would be nice to have a deacon.” If these danger signals appear, the candidate is seeking ordination for the wrong reasons and should be gently but firmly dissuaded. Otherwise, the perennial accusation of clericalizing lay ministry may be warranted.
- Diocesan discernment committees must assiduously avoid classifying the diaconate as a secondary order of ministry or as “next-best” to the priesthood. In some instances, candidates for non-stipendiary ministry have not been considered suitable material for the priesthood but have been told that they should satisfy themselves with the diaconate instead.
- The continued existence of the transitional diaconate beside the vocational diaconate, undesirable as it may be, but tenacious as it is too, presents its own set of problems:
 - Candidates for the diaconate may not make the distinction between the two and consider that their diaconate is a step to “full ordination” – an unfortunate phrase used in the author's experience. Diocesan discernment processes must, from the outset, clearly identify the diaconate as a unique, permanent vocation – no easy task, since so many Anglicans, including clergy, persist in assuming that the diaconate should normally culminate in the presbyterate.
 - Some deacons, once ordained, even if ostensibly as vocational deacons, may then seek ordination to the priesthood. If this is allowed to happen, another perennial accusation is justified: the diaconate is being used as a back door to the priesthood. Dioceses must take a firm stand both before and after diaconal ordination. If a locally-ordained deacon subsequently feels a call to the priesthood, that person should be required to go back to “square one” and start anew the process of discernment, formation and ordination.
- Beware of “episcopal end-runs,” to use an expression of one Canadian director of deacons. Bishops sometimes ignore or override the recommendations on diaconal ordination of the appropriate diocesan body, or pressure that body, or let it be known that the candidate has the personal support of the bishop, or seek to do a favour to a priest who ardently wishes the candidate to be a deacon in his or her parish. This can wreak havoc with the process and lead to

⁹¹ See Appendix C for information on the Diocese of Toronto program.

unsuitable ordinations. While bishops do have the last word in ordination, and in theory can ordain whomever they wish, they should discipline themselves to follow due process like everyone else.

Formation

A variety of training programs for the diaconate exists. Much will depend on the educational background and life experience of the postulant, given that most candidates for the vocational diaconate seek ordination later in life. Diocesan programs normally take this into account and adapt their formation to the perceived needs of the candidate. At a minimum, postulants should have training in the Old and New Testaments, basic theology, church history, pastoral care, prayer and spirituality, preaching, and liturgy. This can be done through a combination of correspondence or on-line courses, participation in seminars, weekend sessions and summer courses. Hands-on training and supervision in the parish by experienced clergy are valuable. Consultation and fellowship with, and mentorship by, existing deacons should be part of the process. Given the prevailing ambiguity about the diaconate in the Anglican Communion, thorough study of the diaconate is vital – its history, its place in the theology of orders, its contemporary practice, the roles and expectations of the deacon, the place of the deacon in church polity and in parish life, the liturgical function of the deacon. Only if these are clearly explained to, and acknowledged by, the candidate, will that person approach ordination without the misconceptions alluded to in the Discernment section above.

Ordination

Each diocese will have its own preparation for ordination. This usually involves meetings between the postulants and the director of deacons (if such exists), bishop and parish priest and some form of pre-ordination retreat. The following comments are directed more to the actual ordination service, which is of vital importance not only to the ordinand but to the gathered community for which he or she is being ordained. The symbolism of the ordination rite cannot be over-emphasized. Of course this is true for any ordination, but it is crucial for the diaconate, which, as we have seen, is constantly misunderstood, under-valued and even distorted. A well-conducted ordination can send all the right messages. Conversely, a poorly-done ordination sends very wrong messages. The author has experienced superb diaconal ordinations but also, alas, some disastrous ones.

- *The postulant should study the ordination rite.* While this may seem obvious, some ordinands have been known to approach the ordination service unprepared and not fully aware of what is going to happen. An appropriate person should take them through the liturgy step by step.
- *The diocesan authorities should carefully prepare the service:* its location, music, preacher, readers and other individual roles. *There must be a rehearsal* – not last-minute and rushed, but calm and prayerful, allowing all the time it takes for the participants to be comfortable.
- *The integrity of the ordinal must be preserved.* This is no time for liturgical experimentation or for catering to the individual whims of the ordinand or the parish priest. In one ordination attended by the author, the parish priest ran the service, was MC, preached, and read the gospel, despite the presence of deacons – hardly the right messages for the congregation! In another, the ordinand was allowed to change the order of the liturgy so he could read the Gospel himself. Ordinands may be consulted on the readers, preacher and other roles – and no more.
- *Do not combine diaconal ordinations with others.* Deacons should *never* be ordained at the same service as priests. We would go further and urge that transitional and vocational deacons not be

ordained at the same service. To do so aids and abets the confusion of orders. And at ordinations to the presbyterate, the ordinands should *not* begin the service wearing a diaconal stole, to have it replaced after the consecration by the priest's stole. This sends precisely the wrong message about graduation to higher office in the Church.

- *The service should visibly involve other deacons.* While deacons do not historically form a “college” like that of the presbyters, they should enjoy fellowship, meet regularly, and, at diaconal ordinations, collectively welcome the ordinands to their number. Deacons fulfil their normal roles at the ordination: assisting the bishop; reading the Gospel; preparing the table. A newly-ordained deacon typically assists at the altar for the Eucharist and gives the Dismissal. At diaconal ordinations in the Diocese of Qu’Appelle, all deacons present form a semi-circle around the bishop at the prayer of consecration. Deacons help vest the new deacon in the dalmatic (if worn) and stole (preferably outside the dalmatic). Deacons can also act as presenters, litanist or communion ministers.

Chapter IV Contemporary Issues

Objections to the Diaconate

The 1974 report to the Church of England, already mentioned, recommending abolition of the diaconate, based its conclusion on two main arguments: that “there was no functional task that belonged exclusively to deacons” and that “deacons take away from, and indeed clericalize, ministry which properly belonged to lay people.”⁹² One objection to the diaconate, then, is that deacons are not necessary because lay people can do everything they can. Technically this is true. But it is also very misleading. For one thing, lay people rarely do *all* the things that a deacon does: the liturgical functions at the Eucharist; officiating at Morning or Evening Prayer; conducting some baptisms, weddings and funerals; occasionally preaching; pastoral, teaching or administrative duties; social action; enabling lay ministry; playing a practical and symbolic role in the wider community. For another, to repeat a point already made, deacons are *ordained*, officially commissioned by the Church to which they make a lifetime commitment. Of course, every Christian makes a commitment in baptism, but there is a major difference of role – which takes us back to the organic nature of the Church, where each has a specific role to fulfil. “The deacon is thrust into a position of leadership and is acknowledged, *on account of the solemn rite of ordination* [our emphasis], as a leader who serves, enabling the *diakonia* of the whole church.”⁹³

The second objection is that a revived diaconate risks clericalizing lay ministry: we do not need another clerical order to do things which should be done by lay people, and some deacons act like mini-priests. There is indeed that risk, and some deacons do fall into that trap. But if we are worried about clericalism, we should also look at the “omnivorous priesthood,” the one-man-band syndrome still often found in the Anglican Church. Most assuredly, the risk of clericalism is not limited to the diaconate! In any event, we have emphasized that enabling lay ministry should be one of the prime objectives of the deacon; deacons who are not doing so should have a long, hard look at themselves. The diaconate need not and should not discourage lay ministry; in fact, it should do exactly the opposite. “A renewed diaconate *can* be an agent for ‘declericalization’,” said John Booty, “an order of persons respected as participants in the ordained ministry with the status and perspective of the

⁹² Quoted by Bishop David Stancliffe in the Foreword to Rosalind Brown, *Being a Deacon Today*, vii.

⁹³ Booty, *The Servant Church*, 89.

laity.”⁹⁴ The Report of the 1998 Lambeth Conference addressed this very issue: “The experience of many dioceses indicates that the appropriate training and oversight of deacons at work in dioceses, congregations and agencies of care, advocacy and justice will ensure that more, not less, lay participation in servant ministry will occur.”⁹⁵ In *The Hanover Report*, the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission responded to both of the above objections:

*[...] deacons have no special powers or activities exclusively reserved to them. What is, however, distinctive is their call to be **publicly accountable servants of the church** [our emphasis] who have a charge to model, encourage and coordinate diakonia. This is the particular call or vocation of the deacon that is not shared by all Christians.*⁹⁶

Other objections to the diaconate are more pragmatic. Some bishops fear losing control over ordained clergy who are not employed by the Church – even though non-stipendiary deacons (and, for that matter, non-stipendiary priests), like all clergy, must be licensed to carry out their functions. Some priests, especially those accustomed to solo ministry, are apprehensive that deacons will challenge their status. Interestingly, Lutheran deaconesses attending the 2000 conference of Canadian Anglican deacons mentioned the same issue vis-à-vis their pastors. The Anglican-Lutheran International Commission, in an important statement, recognized it as a challenge for both Churches:

*In both traditions, the presbyters may perceive a renewed diaconate as a threat to their own identity and role. **This will be especially so where the presbyteral office is seen as the embodiment of all ordained ministry** [our emphasis]. If, however, presbyters can welcome deacons as partners-in-ministry, both liturgically and within the church's mission, then they themselves may be freed to exercise a more focused ministry, bearing responsibility for the life of the community in Word and sacrament. In this way, too, the diaconate can stand as a witness against the perennial threat of clericalism, an ecclesiastical distortion rooted in exclusivist attitudes and practices. Deacons are called by the very nature of their order to stand as a witness to presbyters and bishops that the authority of all ordained ministry is for service alone.*⁹⁷

The Diaconate as Ecumenical Opportunity

Given that the return of the deacon in the western Church occurred in the same period as serious ecumenical discussions, the inter-church context is of considerable interest. Indeed, it is conceivable, in the words of the *Hanover Report*, that the diaconate could be viewed as an “ecumenical opportunity” and could assist Christian Churches in their quest for unity. A landmark 1982 document of the World Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, succinctly expressed the deacon's role:

*Deacons represent to the Church its calling as servant in the world. By struggling in Christ's name with the myriad needs of societies and persons, deacons exemplify the interdependence of worship and service in the Church's life.*⁹⁸

In dialogue between Anglicans and Roman Catholics or Orthodox, the diaconate has rarely been singled out for particular attention, largely because these Communion share the same basic view of

⁹⁴ Ibid., 85.

⁹⁵ *The Official Report of the Lambeth Conference, 1998*, 203.

⁹⁶ *The Hanover Report*, 23.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 22.

⁹⁸ Geneva: World Council of Churches, Faith and Order Paper No. 111, 1982, 27.

the order. However, whereas the Anglican Communion followed the Roman Catholic Church in reviving the diaconate after many centuries of neglect, the Orthodox Churches have always maintained distinctive deacons (as well as the transitional diaconate).⁹⁹

Women in the Diaconate

In the Orthodox Churches, theologians have recognized that women were ordained deacons (usually called deaconesses) in the Byzantine Church, and several efforts have been made since the 19th century to resume the practice. Kyriaki FitzGerald records such attempts, and some actual ordinations, in the Russian and Greek Orthodox Churches between the mid-19th and mid-20th centuries. The Inter-Orthodox Theological Consultation held in Rhodes in 1988 formally recommended restoring “the apostolic order of deaconesses.”¹⁰⁰ The Consultation noted that earlier in the Church’s history, “the deaconess was ordained within the sanctuary during the Divine Liturgy with two prayers; she received the Orarion (the deacon’s stole) and received Holy Communion at the Altar.” Fitzgerald pointed out that the Rhodes Consultation “clearly affirmed women deacons were ordained in the Byzantine period and recommended that this practice be restored.” She reported several further consultations and conferences which urged the Orthodox Churches to ordain deaconesses.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who had attended the Rhodes Consultation as a priest, stated in 1995 that “there is no canonical difficulty in ordaining women as deacons in the Orthodox Church.” Two years later, at a consultation of Orthodox women at the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul, Bartholomew spoke of the “call for the full restoration of the order of the deaconesses.”¹⁰¹ Roman Catholic scholar Phyllis Zagano points out that the Armenian Apostolic Church, one of the Oriental, non-Chalcedonian churches, “has never abandoned its practice of ordaining women to the diaconate.” Since deacons were required at celebrations of the Eucharist, women were ordained for this purpose in convents. In the 20th century, this ministry was extended to parish churches.¹⁰²

The question of ordaining women to the diaconate is not excluded in the Roman Catholic Church, where “official pronouncements refusing to ordain women to the priesthood carefully refrain from any references to the diaconate in this context.”¹⁰³ The majority of scholarship there, as in Orthodoxy, after some debate, appears to have concluded that women were indeed ordained to the diaconate during the first millennium. Phyllis Zagano contends that the Church could, and now should, resume the ordination of women as deacons. Indeed, she asserts that, since the Roman Catholic Church recognizes the validity of the orders of the Orthodox and Oriental churches, it *de facto* recognizes that of women deacons such as those of the Armenian Apostolic Church.¹⁰⁴

Another Roman Catholic writer, John Winjaards, takes this a step further. In *The Ordination of Women in the Catholic Church: Unmasking a Cuckoo’s Egg Tradition*, he rebuts the traditional arguments since mediaeval times against the ordination of women.¹⁰⁵ He then goes on in another book to argue that, although the diaconate is indeed a separate order with its own integrity, the

⁹⁹ For a view of the Orthodox diaconate, see Kyriaki Fitzgerald, “A Commentary on the Diaconate in the Contemporary Orthodox Church,” in Christine Hall, ed., *The Deacon’s Ministry*, 147-158.

¹⁰⁰ Kyriaki Fitzgerald, “A Commentary on the Diaconate...,” 156.

¹⁰¹ Kyriaki Fitzgerald, *Women Deacons in the Orthodox Church*, 60-171.

¹⁰² Phyllis Zagano, *Holy Saturday: An Argument for the Restoration of the Female Diaconate in the Catholic Church* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2000), 171-172.

¹⁰³ Jill Pinnock, “The History of the Diaconate,” in Christine Hall, ed., *The Deacon’s Ministry*, 22.

¹⁰⁴ *Holy Saturday*, 173-174.

¹⁰⁵ London: Darton, Longman & Todd; New York: Continuum, 2001.

doctrine of the unity of orders means that “[s]ince women in the past did receive the sacrament of the diaconate, they are obviously capable of receiving holy orders as such; that means also the priesthood and episcopacy.”¹⁰⁶

American Roman Catholic deacon William Ditewig notes that Pope Benedict XVI, as Cardinal Ratzinger, head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, said that “the possibility of ordaining women as deacons remains a question open for debate and discussion.” While some theologians agree with Winjgaards on the unity of orders, he says, others argue that “sufficient diversity exists to distinguish between the sacerdotal (priestly) orders of bishops and presbyters, and the order of deacons. Because of this diversity, they argue, it might be possible to ordain women deacons.”¹⁰⁷ Roman Catholic scholar Kenan B. Osborne argues that

*The permanent diaconate should be open also to women. Several dioceses and even conferences of local bishops have refused to establish the permanent diaconate in their dioceses precisely because it is not open to women. The present rumblings about establishing a ministry of deaconesses are not an answer to the issues involved in an open and permanent diaconate.*¹⁰⁸

He believes that “if the permanent male diaconate can be reestablished after eleven hundred years of inactivity, then in a similar way there can be a reestablishing of the ministry of deaconesses after a similar length of inactivity.”¹⁰⁹ From time to time, various Roman Catholic bishops and episcopal conferences – for example, that of Ireland in 2014 – have recommended admitting women to the diaconate. We have seen that the inability to have women deacons was one reason why the Roman Catholic bishops in western Canada declined for decades to institute diaconal programs. Announcing in 2013 his “diocesan-wide discernment about whether to ordain permanent deacons,” Bishop Don Bolen of the Diocese of Saskatoon observed that “the discussion about opening the permanent diaconate to women is a very important discussion for the universal church,” while recognizing that “the permanent diaconate would only be open to men at this time.”¹¹⁰ This continued to be a major issue in the diocese after its decision to proceed with the diaconate.

However, there is also strong opposition to female deacons in the Roman Catholic Church. German theologian and bishop Gerhard Müller, already cited, takes the same view of the unity of orders as John Winjgaards, but draws the opposite conclusion about women deacons. He categorically states that women cannot be ordained to any of the orders of ministry – and he is clearly unhappy with the Anglican Communion for doing so. Müller takes pains to discredit the idea that women were sacramentally ordained deacons in the early Church (interestingly, he does not address the very different opinion of Orthodox theologians on the matter). He complains that the “vote in favour of a women’s diaconate, which bishops are then supposed to communicate to Rome, has become a part of the ritual at synods, academic conferences and workshops.”¹¹¹ Unfortunately for the proponents of a female Roman Catholic diaconate, Bishop Müller is now Cardinal Müller and Prefect of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith...

¹⁰⁶ *Women Deacons in the Early Church*, 135.

¹⁰⁷ William T. Ditewig, *101 Questions and Answers on Deacons* (New York: Paulist Press, 2004), 52.

¹⁰⁸ Kenan B. Osborne, O.F.M., “Envisioning a Theology of Ordained and Lay Ministry: Lay/Ordained Ministry – Current Issues of Ambiguity,” in Susan K. Wood, ed., *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood: Theologies of Lay and Ordained Ministry* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 223.

¹⁰⁹ Kenan B. Osborne, O.F.M., *The Permanent Diaconate: Its History and Place in the Sacrament of Orders*, 174.

¹¹⁰ *Prairie Messenger*, 9 October 2013, 6.

¹¹¹ *Priesthood and Diaconate*, 42.

Lutheran Deacons

The United Church of Canada and a number of other Protestant denominations have a form of diaconal ministry and in many evangelical Churches there are boards of deacons. But these are clearly for lay persons and do not involve ordination. The situation in the Lutheran churches is much more complex. Lutherans generally did not preserve an ordained diaconate at the Reformation, but they later had commissioned diaconal ministers, including deaconesses, a movement which began in 19th century German Lutheranism. The 1996 *Hanover Report* of the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission examined the diaconate from the point of view of the two Churches. The report was dedicated to the memory of Tom Dorris, an ordained Swedish Lutheran deacon who served in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, was “a keen advocate of a restored diaconate,” and had been working at the World Council of Churches in Geneva.

The report noted that “ ‘Deacon’ in most Lutheran traditions refers to a person consecrated or commissioned to a ministry focused on parish work or social service, but not ordained.”¹¹² However, it added that some Lutheran churches were actively reconsidering the ordained diaconate. The Church of Norway, for example, where deacons are parish workers, “has been wrestling with the issue of whether deacons are within the *ministerium ecclesiasticum*, together with the pastors and bishops.”¹¹³ In the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, deacons are not ordained; most are women qualified in health care, although some are social workers. There has been discussion, however, of the need to incorporate teaching and liturgical roles in their ministry.

In the Church of Sweden, the situation is very different: there is a permanent, ordained diaconate as part of a three-fold ministry – but no transitional diaconate. The Church of Sweden’s official website, in a very Anglican way, emphasizes that at the Reformation the church retained the historic episcopate and the orders of bishops, priests and deacons. It notes that in the 19th century, “several deaconess institutions were founded in Sweden on the German model. The deaconesses were bound by vows to a motherhouse, and to a life of celibacy and poverty. Around 1900, men were admitted to the diaconate.” In the 1960s the celibacy and motherhouse requirements were dropped. Today, says the website, “a deacon (deaconess) visits, helps, and supports those in bodily or spiritual need; gives Christian nurture and teaching in the faith; is a sign of merciful kindness in the parish and society at large, and in all things serves Christ in the neighbour.”¹¹⁴ Deacons in the Swedish church were traditionally engaged in social ministry, latterly as complementary to the state system; it is only in recent decades that they have also developed teaching and liturgical roles.

The Porvoo Agreement, concluded in 1996 between most Nordic Lutheran Churches and the Anglican Churches of the British Isles, leading to the Porvoo Communion, stated that they would welcome persons episcopally ordained in any of our churches to the office of bishop, priest or deacon to serve [...] in that ministry in the receiving church without reordination and work towards a common understanding of diaconal ministry.

However, in 1993 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s General Assembly rejected an ordained diaconate (saying it was not the Reformation tradition, despite the example of the Church of Sweden and later Porvoo) and established its present ministry of lay diaconal ministers. This was despite Deacon Tom Dorris’s best efforts and much to his distress. He was, says Episcopal Deacon Ormonde Plater, “a living example of the reality of an ordained Lutheran diaconate.”¹¹⁵

¹¹² *The Hanover Report*, 14.

¹¹³ Diocese of Salisbury, *The Distinctive Diaconate*, 50.

¹¹⁴ <http://www.svenskakyrkan.se>

¹¹⁵ Comment by Deacon Ormonde Plater to the author, December 2011.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada does not have an ordained diaconate; yet Lutheran deaconesses who shared in the first gathering of Canadian Anglican deacons in Winnipeg in 2000 affirmed that the difference between their commissioning rite and the ordination of pastors was almost imperceptible. In Anglican-Lutheran dialogue at both the international and Canadian levels, while more attention has focused on the episcopate, there has been some interest on the Lutheran side in the diaconate as part of a three-fold ordained ministry. On the other hand, given the ambivalence of their own attitude to the diaconate, Anglicans have scarcely been in a position to instruct Lutherans on the subject. As the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission politely noted in *The Hanover Report*,

*Anglican churches are challenged to restore to the diaconate [...] its character as a lifelong and distinct form of ordained ministry, including with its liturgical function a pastoral focus on caritas and justitia in church and society.*¹¹⁶

An Opportunity?

Where, then, is the “ecumenical opportunity” for the diaconate?

First, the existence, revival or introduction of deacons in so many different church traditions – Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran, and Protestant or Reformed – points to a widespread recognition of the need and desirability of diaconal ministries. This provides a common bond between the Churches and an invaluable experience of shared ministry, even if the forms may be different (as we have seen, in some faith traditions deacons are ordained, while in others they are not; in the case of Lutherans, ordination to the diaconate is practised in some national Churches and not in others). The World Federation of Diaconal Associations and Diaconal Communities gives voice to the world-wide diaconal movement. Also known as Diakonia World Federation, it is organized into three regions: Diakonia Region Africa-Europe (DRAE), Diakonia Asia-Pacific (DAP), and Diakonia of the Americas and the Caribbean (DOTAC). There is an evident opportunity here for practical ecumenical relations and a growth in mutual understanding between churches, stemming from their mutual interest in diaconal ministry.

Second, deacons can work together on a local level. Anglicans in Canada enjoy a mutual recognition of ministries with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, as do the Anglican and Lutheran parties to the Porvoo Agreement. Anglican deacons can collaborate with Lutheran deaconesses and support them in their quest to make their office a fully ordained order. Where there is not a mutual recognition of ministries – the Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions do not recognize the validity of Anglican orders – there is still the potential for local cooperation. For example, the Anglican Diocese of Qu’Appelle and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Regina entered into a covenant relationship in 2011, and the deacons of both dioceses meet and work together.

The *third* area of ecumenical potential for the diaconate is, in many respects, the most interesting and the most challenging: the ordination of women. As we have seen above, while women were admitted to the diaconate in the early church, especially in the East, and have been admitted to the order in recent times in the Anglican and some Lutheran traditions, this is still not the case for the Roman Catholic and most of the Orthodox churches. Yet theologians in both of these communions have recognized that historically women were once ordained deacons and theoretically could be again, despite the firm opposition of both Churches to the ordination of women to the priesthood (and of course the episcopate).

¹¹⁶ *The Diaconate as Ecumenical Opportunity*, 22.

The main obstacle to female diaconal ordination, certainly in the Roman Catholic Church, appears to be the concern that, if women were ordained deacons, there would be increased pressure to ordain them priests. American Roman Catholic deacon Thomas Baker says

*Much of the resistance to women deacons is based on a fear that it would create an expectation that women priests wouldn't be far behind. [...] But at some point, perhaps a vision of the opportunity, rather than the risks, will carry the day. For my part, I can't imagine a change in discipline that would bring more life to the church, and more promise for its future.*¹¹⁷

The crux of the matter is the continued existence of the transitional diaconate. Despite the welcome revival of the vocational diaconate, as long as the diaconate is also a pre-requisite for the priesthood it will be seen as potentially leading to ordination to the presbyterate instead of as a wholly different order of ministry. Indeed, in the Anglican Communion, some of those accepted for the vocational, non-stipendiary diaconate, once ordained deacon, have used this as a channel to seek the priesthood, and some bishops have ordained them as such. The case for abolition of the transitional diaconate, already a strong one, is reinforced by the potential for ordained ministry for women in those Churches which will not accept female priests. Ideally, the diaconate could one day be an order of ministry open to women in Churches of very varied traditions. It is timely, therefore, to turn to the vexed issue of sequential ordination and the transitional diaconate.

Direct Ordination: Once a Deacon, Always a Deacon?

*Direct ordination, sometimes known as per saltum (by a leap), was the universal practice in the early church. In the middle ages, the church gradually introduced a discipline of ordaining persons through a sequence of orders which has continued to the present.*¹¹⁸

There is a movement, especially in the Episcopal Church in the U.S.A., to revive *per saltum* ordination, by ordaining people directly to the priesthood rather than passing them first through the transitional diaconate (some, though not nearly as much, attention has also been paid to *per saltum* ordination to the episcopate). The Anglican-Lutheran *Hanover Report* encouraged Anglicans to look at this issue:

*Such a restoration [of the vocational diaconate] would imply both a reconsideration of the transitional diaconate and the possibility of direct ordination to the priesthood of persons discerned to have presbyteral vocations without their "passing through" the diaconate. The possibility of such direct ordination is not excluded on historical or theological grounds.*¹¹⁹

Historical Overview

A digression into what is, on the surface, an arcane topic of church order, in fact sheds much light on the key issues of ordination in general and the diaconate in particular. Direct ordination, as we have already seen, applied to the episcopate as well as the presbyterate in the early Church: lay people could be ordained to any of the three orders of ministry. For example, Cyprian of Carthage was

¹¹⁷ Thomas Baker. *Deacon (I Like Being in Parish Ministry series)* (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2002), 40.

¹¹⁸ Edwin F. Hallenbeck, ed., *The Orders of Ministry, Reflections on Direct Ordination* (Providence, RI: North American Association for the Diaconate, 1996), 9. We are indebted to this compilation of writings on the *per saltum* issue for the remarks which follow.

¹¹⁹ *The Hanover Report*, 22.

ordained presbyter in 257 without having been a deacon. Athanasius was directly ordained bishop of Alexandria in 328. In 374, Ambrose was baptized and then ordained bishop of Milan.¹²⁰ Augustine was ordained directly to the presbyterate in 391. However, “sequential” ordination began in the fourth century and gradually became generalized over the next five centuries, although both practices continued side-by-side until as late as the tenth century. The main reason for electing bishops from the presbyterate was to ensure adequate episcopal preparation and training, although the diaconate could, and on occasion did, serve the same purpose. There was not the same rationale for presbyters to first be deacons and the practice emerged much later. It became codified from the tenth century as canonical practice, although in theory it was not required for priestly ordination.

The episcopate was another matter altogether. According to the teaching of Thomas Aquinas (13th century), it was basically a derivative of the presbyterate – priestly power was essential for the bishop to function as a eucharistic presider. Hence, deacons elected as bishops would require prior ordination to the presbyterate. (Note that this was the reverse of the early Church’s practice where the bishop delegated his authority, such as eucharistic presidency, to the presbyters.) Thus, what began as a practical system of training ended up as a theological requirement.¹²¹ Deacon Ormonde Plater makes a distinction between “sequential” ordination, a form of preparation, and “cumulative” ordination, the mediaeval theology of incorporating all three orders through sequential ordination.¹²² Cumulative ordination is illustrated in mediaeval statues and brasses showing bishops in “full pontificals” – mitre, chasuble and dalmatic.

Sequential Ordination Today

Some contemporary supporters of the diaconate, especially in the Church of England, continue to hold this view. “You are a deacon first and even if later you become a priest or a bishop, you never cease to be a deacon,” says the 2003 report for the Diocese of Salisbury.¹²³ This line continues in a subsequent book, *Being a Deacon Today*, by the report’s chairperson, Rosalind Brown, written in part, says Bishop David Stancliffe in its Foreword, for “all those who are already deacons but are inclined to forget it – the priests and bishops of our Church.”¹²⁴

There is support for this view in the Roman Catholic tradition, where, as in Anglicanism, ordination is seen as permanent. “Ordination always affects the one ordained *permanently*,” says Roman Catholic deacon William Ditewig. “When a ‘transitional’ deacon is later ordained to the priesthood, [...] he does not *cease* being a deacon, any more than a priest later ordained bishop *ceases* being a priest.” In his effort to counter the entrenched perception that the diaconate is temporary, Ditewig makes the point that there is “only one Order of Deacons;” there are not “two diaconates, one transitional and one permanent.”¹²⁵

Referring to the theory of cumulative ordination, another Roman Catholic writer, Susan Wood, sees the deacon as participating in the *diakonia* of the bishop:

¹²⁰ Louis Weil refutes the view that Ambrose was baptized and ordained deacon, priest and bishop in the same Week in “Should the Episcopal Church Permit Direct Ordination?” (*The Orders of Ministry*, 56-58).

¹²¹ A good historical explanation is found in the chapter by Canadian scholar John St. H. Gibaut, “Sequential Ordination in Historical Perspective: A Response to J. Robert Wright,” in *The Orders of Ministry*, 73-95.

¹²² “Through the Dust – Patristic Presbyterianism,” in *The Orders of Ministry*, 97-98.

¹²³ *The Distinctive Diaconate*, 6.

¹²⁴ *Being a Deacon Today*, viii.

¹²⁵ William T. Ditewig, *101 Questions and Answers on Deacons*, 26, 27.

*When viewed from the perspective of the bishop's ordination to the fullness of the sacrament of orders, the bishop is the one who first and foremost bears responsibility for the diaconal service in his diocese. The deacon in his ordination to the diaconate actually shares in the diaconal responsibility which is first the bishop's responsibility.*¹²⁶

The 2007 Church of England report suggests that deacons, even those “impatient to be priests,” should be required by their bishop to spend longer than one year in the diaconate “in order to live more fully into that calling. [...] For some, diaconal ministry would be an ongoing commitment: their ministry would find its fulfilment in the distinctive diaconate. For others, the diaconate would lead, perhaps after a period several years, to ordination to the presbyterate.”¹²⁷

The arguments against *per saltum* ordination generally go as follows: a bishop needs to have been a priest, and a priest to have been a deacon, so that (a) in practical terms they acquire adequate experience and knowledge (sequential ordination), and (b) they may fulfil their ministries symbolically and sacramentally (cumulative ordination). Defenders of cumulative ordinations claim, for example, that they “make the role of the priests ampler and more intelligible both to themselves and to those they serve. Those who offer Eucharist must first offer themselves. It is appropriate that priests should be first deacons,”¹²⁸ and that “ordaining is the distinctive vocation of the bishop precisely because the order of the episcopate alone is understood to contain within itself the other two orders of which the bishop is chief minister at ordination.”¹²⁹

Countering the practical argument for sequential ordination, Deacon Ormonde Plater points out that the rationale for the parish priesthood as preparation for the episcopate scarcely applies to the contemporary presbyterate: “Six months as a transitional deacon [...] doesn't make one a logical choice for priest [...] [it is] too short a time in the wrong office.”¹³⁰ As for the symbolic or sacramental argument for cumulative orders, we have already emphasized that *baptism*, not ordination, is the source of the Church's ministry of service. “The order of *diakonos*, of deacon, is a specific, designated ministry [...] *Diakonia*, or service, on the other hand, is a basic aspect of the vocation of every Christian...”¹³¹ “It is important not to make passage through the order of deacon the sole guarantee of a person's fidelity to the universal Christian vocation to service, *diakonia*. Baptism, not ordination as a deacon, should be seen as the source of a priest's or a bishop's commitment to service.”¹³² To the hackneyed phrase justifying cumulative ordination, “once a deacon, always a deacon,” the response could be: when ordained priest, one leaves the order of deacons for the order of presbyters – but retains baptismal *diakonia*.

History, tradition, and solidarity with other episcopal Churches seem to be the real reasons for maintaining sequential ordination. An attempt to permit direct ordination in the Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. was blocked by its House of Bishops at the General Convention in Denver in 2000. “It would be a grave mistake to change something that the Catholic Church has held for a very long time,” said one bishop. Another brought up the old chestnut of the diaconate as preparation for the priesthood: “Would any of you have wanted to serve as a bishop without having first gained experience as a priest?” Abolition of the transitional diaconate may be logical, historically justifiable

¹²⁶ Susan K. Wood, S.C.L., “Conclusion: Convergence Points toward a Theology of Ordered Ministries,” in Susan K. Wood, ed., *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood: Theologies of Lay and Ordained Ministry*, 262.

¹²⁷ *The Mission and Ministry of the Whole Church*.

¹²⁸ Charles P. Price, “The Threefold Cord: A Case for Cumulative Ordination,” in *The Orders of Ministry*, 24.

¹²⁹ J. Robert Wright, “Sequential or Cumulative Orders vs. Direct Ordination,” in *ibid.*, 50.

¹³⁰ “Through the Dust,” in *ibid.*, 98.

¹³¹ Louis Weil, in *ibid.*, 63.

¹³² Elizabeth J. Smith, “Response to Louis Weil,” in *ibid.*, 68.

and theologically sound. But given a thousand-year history, the difficulty of reaching a consensus in the Anglican Communion, and ecumenical implications, it is unlikely in the foreseeable future. And yet there are stirrings in the Roman Catholic Church. William Ditewig, for example, notes that

Some theologians are beginning to suggest that since the vocation of the seminarian is properly to the priesthood and not to the diaconate, and because a transitional diaconate no longer seems to be serving the real pastoral and practical needs of the people of God, the practice should be discontinued.

Referring to vision of the Second Vatican Council and of Pope John Paul II for the diaconal role of the whole Church, Deacon Ditewig says that

*If this conciliar and papal vision is ever to reach its full potential, these theologians suggest that retaining a vestige of the *cursus honorum* – in which all ordained ministry is to be interpreted and find its fulfilment within the priesthood – is an anachronism that ought to be stopped.*

While recognizing that other theologians argue for the retention of the transitional diaconate, he points out that “whether the Church continues to ordain transitional deacons or not is within her authority to adjust or adapt, just as was done with tonsure, the minor orders, and the subdiaconate.”¹³³ Elsewhere, he says “the use of one sacramental order as a necessary prerequisite to another is a pattern that, as a minimum, is no longer absolute and should be most closely examined.”¹³⁴ Other Roman Catholic writers agree. Susan Woods proposes “abandoning a transitional diaconate as a sacramental prerequisite to presbyteral ordination.”¹³⁵ Richard Gaillardetz reminds us that “the ancient tradition in no way presupposed that one must advance from one ordained ministry to the next.” He argues that “the existence of a ‘transitional diaconate’ risks denigrating diaconal ministry by reducing it to a kind of pastoral internship or field education assignment.”¹³⁶

The ending of the transitional diaconate is thus not inconceivable. Ideally, one day, Churches with the historic three-fold ministry of bishop, priest or presbyter, and deacon will, like the Lutheran Church of Sweden, ordain directly to the priesthood – and perhaps even, like the early Church, to the episcopate. In the meantime, the vocational diaconate must persevere alongside an anachronism.

Conclusion

The transitional diaconate is one of the hindrances to revival of the order of deacons. It is a hindrance, however, that we should simply bypass. What we *can* do is promote the “distinctive” diaconate – as a permanent vocation for locally-raised-up, non-stipendiary ministry, and occasionally for professionally-trained stipendiary ministry too. A ministry symbolic of the *diakonia* of all believers, just as the presbyterate symbolizes the priesthood of all believers. An order which primarily enables and encourages lay ministry. An order which is representational of the Church outside the Church and helps carry out its mission beyond the gathered community. Part of the problem for the diaconate has been simply the lack of deacons: if people don’t know what deacons are, there is no momentum to ordain more. On the other hand, the best argument for the diaconate is

¹³³ *101 Questions and Answers on Deacons*, 27-28.

¹³⁴ William T. Ditewig, *The Emerging Diaconate: Servant Leaders in a Servant Church* (New York: Paulist Press, 2007), 135.

¹³⁵ Susan K. Wood, S.C.L., *Sacramental Orders* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 166-171.

¹³⁶ Richard R. Gaillardetz, “On the Theological Integrity of the Diaconate,” in Cummings, Ditewig and Gaillardetz, *Theology of the Diaconate: The State of the Question* (New York: Paulist Press, 2005), 71.

the presence and example of deacons. The diaconate will always rebound. It is resilient and irrepressible. It is, after all, an ancient form of ministry, rooted in the later New Testament, developing in the early Church and prospering in the first five centuries, in some cases the first millennium – and without interruption in the Orthodox Churches. Despite a thousand years of neglect in the western Church, it survived and has revived. As a 1989 Anglican Church of Canada report put it,

*There's a deacon-shaped hole in the Church, waiting to be filled by people whose example and experience will initiate, encourage, and give leadership to the diaconate of the whole people of God. By raising up such people as deacons or servant-leaders, the Church can breathe new life into an ancient order, making it an equal but different form of ministry.*¹³⁷

The “new life” of the diaconate anticipated in 1989 was evident a generation later at the 2014 conference of the Association of Anglican Deacons in Canada, held in Halifax, Nova Scotia:

[Archdeacons John] Struthers and [Christine] Ross are directors of deacons in their dioceses and are responsible for everything from discernment to the diaconate to policy and discipline. Both are retired from their full-time secular jobs and work as archdeacons alongside their regular parish ministries. Ross said that the appointment of a second diaconal archdeacon and the rise in the number of deacons in Canada show that deacons are “coming into their own.” And coming into their own they are.

As the church focuses on “mission” and becoming a “missional church,” it relies on deacons to do much of the heavy lifting. “It’s no longer oddballs on the fringes using this language of mission... Working on really getting the ministry of deacons is the single most important thing we can do for a re-formation of the church, for the sake of God’s mission, and the call to get on with God’s mission in the world,” said Eileen Scully, director of faith, worship and ministry in the Anglican Church of Canada.

*[Primate Fred] Hiltz asked deacons in the room if they had been ordained for five years or less, and a majority of hands shot up. That, said Hiltz, “is a clear sign of the restoration of the diaconate.”*¹³⁸

Across the Anglican Communion, there is a re-awakening, a sometimes slow and uneven re-emergence, of the diaconate. We see it in the Anglican Church of Canada after a series of setbacks which disappointed and frustrated but did not deter the diaconal movement. This is no coincidence. In the third millennium, the Holy Spirit is stirring us to make new and innovative uses of the ancient Order of Deacons.

¹³⁷ *A Plan to Restore the Diaconate in the Anglican Church of Canada*, 3.

¹³⁸ Cydney Proctor, “Primate pays tribute to deacons,” *Anglican Journal* on-line, 22 August 2014. See also “*Anglican Journal*,” October 2014, 1, 3.

Part B The Deacon in the Worshipping Community

Introduction

The liturgical role is not peripheral to the ministry of the deacon: it is essential. Yet recently-ordained deacons, and often their priests as well, may be unsure or confused about what they should do in worship. Some parishes are unaware that deacons have a role in the liturgy and may be reluctant to accommodate it – for example, lay people may have read the Gospel in the past (though liturgically they shouldn't!) and the parish resists allowing the deacon to now do so.

The purpose of this part of our study is to inform Canadian Anglican deacons and their parishes of the diaconal role in the liturgy and the vestments that may be worn. We assume the normal pattern of deacons assisting priests in parishes (and bishops in episcopal liturgies) and so we emphasize the deacon's role in the Eucharist. We realize, however, that some deacons may find themselves in more isolated situations, presiding at Morning or Evening Prayer, other liturgies of the Word, or, on occasion, communion from the reserved sacrament. We also assume use of *The Book of Alternative Services* in worship, and so our references will be from that book (and from the *Book of Common Prayer* of the Episcopal Church in the United States). The traditional Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* (Canada 1959-1962) makes few references to the order of deacons and omits some diaconal functions from the Eucharist altogether, for example, leading the Prayers of the People and giving the Dismissal. Deacons taking part in Prayer Book services may adapt suggestions in this study as best they can.

Finally, although this paper is primarily intended for Anglicans, we give many references to and comparisons with the diaconate in the Roman Catholic Church, for three reasons:

- (1) The liturgical role and vestments of the deacon in the two traditions are very similar and have identical origins;
- (2) The Anglican Communion owes its revival of the vocational diaconate in large part to the sterling example of the Second Vatican Council and Pope Paul VI; and
- (3) The Anglican Diocese of Qu'Appelle, home of the author, and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Regina entered into a covenantal relationship in 2011. As part of that covenant, and with the support of the two bishops, the deacons of the two dioceses meet and work together.

This study suggests some “best practices” in both liturgy and vestments, without being too prescriptive or rigorous. It takes as its case study St. Paul's Cathedral, Regina (Diocese of Qu'Appelle), which has had a deacon since 1977 and two deacons since 2001. For a full explanation of the diaconal role in Anglican liturgies, see the excellent *Deacons in the Liturgy* by Episcopal deacon Ormonde Plater. While this book goes into more detail than many deacons will need, it provides all kinds of helpful advice and, as Deacon Susanne Watson Epting says in the Foreword, “points toward the liturgy through a diaconal lens.”¹³⁹

The Roman Catholic equivalent is *The Liturgical Ministry of Deacons* by Michael Kwatera, OSB. For another Roman Catholic study, see William T. Ditewig, *The Deacon at Mass: A Theological and Pastoral Guide*, which sets out “to situate the deacon's liturgical and sacramental ministry within the full range of the diaconal ministry.” While, says Deacon Ditewig, it is “important to know *what* a deacon does at Mass, it is even more important to understand *why* the deacon does it.”¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ *Deacons in the Liturgy*, x.

¹⁴⁰ *The Deacon at Mass*, 1-2.

Chapter V The Liturgical Role of the Deacon

Obviously, liturgical customs are going to vary considerably from parish to parish and from diocese to diocese. Liturgies range from the basic and simple to the elaborate and detailed. Some churches, like St. Paul's Cathedral in Regina, enjoy the ministry of children and young people as servers; others may have adult servers or none at all. We have sub-deacons to assist the deacons; most parishes do not. In the Anglican tradition, there are few, if any, fixed liturgical rules. (In the Roman Catholic Church, by contrast, there are international liturgical norms for rites, vestments, ornaments, posture and gesture.¹⁴¹) It is important to keep in mind that there are not "right and wrong ways" in liturgy; there are, rather, recommended ways and varying customs. We should avoid fussiness and stress. The purpose of liturgy is for the community to worship God. We want to do this with joy, dignity and sincerity.

Much liturgical practice will depend on the constraints or opportunities in a particular church building. Some chancels/sanctuaries are small, limiting options for the ministers of the service. Movements such as Gospel processions are dictated by the space available. Sometimes furnishings are moveable; all too often, however, Anglican churches are encumbered by fixed pews, prayer desks and other paraphernalia. At St. Paul's Cathedral, we are fortunate that, over a thirty-year period of evolution, a typically-crowded, century-old Anglican chancel was cleared of its prayer desks, choir stalls, communion rails (now moveable), organ and fixed eastward altar, leaving flexible furnishings and open space which we can adapt to the needs of each liturgy. We recommend the experience to those who are contemplating church renovations!

The Deacon in the Eucharist

The roles in **bold** and subsequently marked *** are the ones which the deacon, when present, should *always* fulfil. The others are recommended but are optional according to local custom. The deacon...

- Carries the Book of Gospels in the entrance procession.
- **Proclaims the Gospel.**
- Sometimes introduces and concludes the Prayers of the People.
- Sometimes leads the Prayers of the People.
- Gives the invitation to confession.
- At the Peace, invites those present to exchange a sign of peace.
- **Prepares the table at the offertory.**
- Turns pages in the altar book for the presider.
- Raises the cup at the doxology.
- Raises the cup at the invitation to communion.
- Assists in the administration of communion.
- Supervises ablutions.
- Makes closing announcements.
- **Gives the Dismissal.**

Note that the deacon plays an *assisting* or *collaborative* role for the presiding celebrant, whether bishop or priest. Deacons do not normally preside. Deacon and celebrant function as a team. Indeed, Father Michael Kwatera writes of "the flying duo in the liturgy" in the "complementary ministries of

¹⁴¹ See *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, Canadian edition (Ottawa: Publications Service, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011).

the priest and deacon [...] As deacons minister within the liturgy, they are a clear sign that the liturgy does not belong to the presiding priest alone.”¹⁴²

The Entrance Rite

The deacon immediately precedes the presiding celebrant (whether priest or bishop) in procession (another custom is for the deacon to process on the celebrant’s right if not carrying a Book of Gospels). If the parish has a Book of Gospels¹⁴³ – which is highly recommended – the deacon carries this in the entrance procession (but *not* at the departure at the end of the service). The ministers acknowledge the altar according to the parish’s custom and the deacon places the Book of Gospels on the altar, perhaps on a bookstand. Henceforth the deacon sits or stands to the celebrant’s right for the prayers, *Gloria*, readings, sermon, creed and Prayers of the People. In some cases, the celebrant presides at the Liturgy of the Word from the altar; preferably, and where space and furniture permit, this should be done elsewhere in the chancel.

******Proclaiming the Gospel***

This is the focal point of the Liturgy of the Word and the single most important act performed by the deacon in the Eucharist. Accordingly, in most parishes the Gospel reading is accompanied by some form of ceremonial, ranging from a simple move by the deacon to the place of the reading, to an elaborate Gospel procession with servers, sub-deacon and incense. Regardless, the proclaiming of the Gospel should be done with care and be the focus of attention of the assembly.¹⁴⁴

i. *Who reads the Gospel?*

If a deacon is present among the ministers of the service, that person *always* reads the Gospel. *The Book of Alternative Services* is specific: it is “the function of a deacon to read the Gospel” (p. 183). The Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer* says “A deacon should read the Gospel” (p. 354). What happens if, as is often the case, no deacon is available? The *BAS* does not address this, only noting that “lay persons should normally be assigned the readings which precede the Gospel” (p. 183). However, the Episcopal book states that “the Deacon or a Priest reads the Gospel” (p. 357). The generally accepted custom, Ormonde Plater says, is that “in the absence of a deacon functioning liturgically, the presider or an assisting priest reads the gospel.”¹⁴⁵ Michael Kwatera, writing from the Roman Catholic perspective, is categorical:

*Only a deacon (or in his absence, a priest) may read the gospel [...] this special diaconal role is very ancient; St. Jerome witnesses to this practice late in the fourth century, and from the time of Gregory the Great (d.604), deacons read only the gospel lesson at the Eucharist.*¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² *The Liturgical Ministry of Deacons*, 14-15.

¹⁴³ This is a large, specially-bound volume containing the gospel readings for all three years of the liturgical Cycle, *The Gospels Revised Common Lectionary*. There is little point in carrying a small book in procession.

¹⁴⁴ *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal* makes this clear: “The reading of the Gospel constitutes the high point of the Liturgy of the Word. The Liturgy itself teaches the great reverence that is to be shown to this reading by setting it off from the other readings with special marks of honour” (25, no. 60).

¹⁴⁵ *Deacons in the Liturgy*, 8.

¹⁴⁶ *The Liturgical Ministry of Deacons*, 35-36.

William Ditewig lists the order of preference for the Gospel reader as first, a deacon, then an assisting priest, and finally, and only in the absence of these ministers, the presiding celebrant.¹⁴⁷ It is not the custom in either the Anglican or the Roman Catholic tradition for lay people to read the Gospel.

ii. *Where does the reading take place?*

The Gospel should be proclaimed from a prominent location in the church. According to *The Book of Alternative Services*, “It is desirable that the readings be read from a lectern or pulpit, and that the Gospel be read from the same lectern or pulpit, or in the midst of the congregation” (p. 183). The lectern (or, in the Roman Catholic tradition, the “ambo”) is an appropriate place for proclaiming the Gospel. The custom of processing down the centre aisle of the nave to read the Gospel “in the midst of the congregation” should be discouraged. Deacon Ormonde Plater pointed out to the author that if we want the gospeller to be heard and seen, half-way down the nave aisle is the worst possible location! (Admittedly, wireless microphones, if available, resolve the sound problem.) At St. Paul’s Cathedral, we normally proclaim the Gospel, using a wireless microphone, from the top of the chancel steps; at most services, a sub-deacon holds the book during the reading of the Gospel.

iii *Blessing the Gospel reader*

It is customary for the deacon as Gospel reader to receive a blessing from the presiding celebrant (or the bishop, if present). The deacon bows before the presider and asks for a blessing. Deacon Ormonde Plater¹⁴⁸ recommends that the presider, making the sign of the cross or laying one or both hands on the deacon’s head, give one of the two following blessings:

*The Lord be in your heart and on your lips, that you may worthily proclaim his gospel:
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*
(from the Roman missal)

May the Spirit of the Lord be upon you as you bring good news to the poor.
(paraphrase of Luke 4: 18)

iv *The Gospel Procession.*

The deacon then moves to the altar and picks up the Book of Gospels. The most common practice is for two servers bearing processional candles to lead the deacon, carrying the Book of Gospels (preceded by the person who is to hold the book if such is the case), to the place of proclamation, during a hymn. Deacon Plater tells us that “traditionally, a cross is not carried in the procession, since in this proclamation the gospel book is the primary symbol of Christ.”¹⁴⁹ At St. Paul’s Cathedral, we sing all verses except the last of the hymn, giving time for the Gospel procession; the final verse is sung *after* the Gospel, allowing the procession to return and the preacher to move to where the sermon is delivered.

¹⁴⁷ *The Deacon at Mass*, 53, 59. *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal* says that the Gospel is to be read “by the Deacon, or, in his absence, by another priest. If, however, a Deacon or another Priest is not present, the Priest Celebrant himself should read the Gospel” (25, no. 59).

¹⁴⁸ *Deacons in the Liturgy*, 38.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibidem*.

v *Proclaiming the Gospel.*

After placing the Book of Gospels on the lectern/ambo or in the hands of the assistant, the deacon says or sings the Gospel acclamation, “The Lord be with you,” with hands extended. After the response, the deacon says or sings the announcement, “The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to . . .,” “making a sign of the cross with the right thumb on the opening word of the gospel, forehead, lips, and breast.”¹⁵⁰ (If incense is used, the deacon censes the Book of the Gospels at this point.) After the response, “Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ,” the deacon proclaims the Gospel. This should be done firmly, clearly and with expression. On some occasions at St. Paul’s Cathedral, the deacon *intones* the Gospel. This is not particularly difficult to do. In 1995, the North American Association for the Diaconate (NAAD) published a booklet by Ormonde Plater which contains tones for the Gospel (and litanies and the Dismissal).¹⁵¹ The Association for Episcopal Deacons provides music for a wide range of specific Gospel readings on its website.¹⁵²

After the Gospel reading, the deacon says or sings the closing acclamation, “The Gospel of Christ.” The custom in some churches is for the deacon to elevate the Book of Gospels at this point (we do at St. Paul’s Cathedral), but it is not necessary. (Another custom in some churches is for the deacon to kiss the opening word of the Gospel passage or, if the bishop is presiding, to bring the book to the bishop to kiss.) Then, closing the book, the deacon may leave it on the lectern/ambo, carry it back to the altar (or a side table), or hand it to the assistant to do so.



Proclaiming the Gospel on All Saint’s Day, 2011, at St. Paul’s Cathedral, Regina. At the top of the chancel steps, Deacon Michael Jackson reads from the Book of Gospels, held by sub-deacon Jan Besse. They are flanked by two servers holding processional candles. The presiding celebrant, Dean Michael Sinclair, remains at his place behind the altar.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁵¹ North American Association for the Diaconate: *Music and Deacons* (Monograph Series No. 8), 1995.

¹⁵² www.diakonoι.org – follow the links: resources→chant the gospel.

Intercessions/Prayers of the People

What is the deacon's role in intercessions? *The Book of Alternative Services* stipulates that deacons or lay people lead the Prayers of the People (pp. 183, 190). Ormonde Plater states that "a deacon is the ordinary leader of the biddings, inviting the people to pray for those in need." "By leading or participating in leading these prayers," he says, "deacons fulfill their ordination role as those who interpret to the church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world." He observes that "although deacons are the preferred leaders, it is common for other baptized persons to lead the prayers."¹⁵³

According to Michael Kwatera, in the Roman Catholic rite "the deacon's ministry inside and outside the liturgy makes him the logical minister to lead these prayers,"¹⁵⁴ and he assumes that the deacon will normally do so. In *Preparing the General Intercessions*, Father Kwatera says that the composing of the prayers "belongs to the faithful as well, and especially to the deacon [...] the pre-eminent minister to prepare and speak the intentions." He notes that "by the end of the fourth century the deacon made the invitation to prayer and spoke the petitions of the litany."¹⁵⁵ *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal* says that the Prayers of the Faithful "are announced from the ambo or from another suitable place, by the Deacon or by a cantor, a reader, or one of the lay faithful."¹⁵⁶

In practice, in both the Anglican and the Roman Catholic traditions, the role of the deacon as intercessor is honoured more in the breach than in the observance. It is important, however, that deacons do at times lead or participate in the Prayers of the People. There are several ways that this can be done:

- i. The deacon takes his or her turn in the roster of intercessors.
- ii. The deacon introduces and concludes the biddings given by a lay intercessor.
- iii. The deacon and a lay person alternate biddings.
- iv. The deacon prepares the intercessions or leads a group preparing them.

At St. Paul's Cathedral, the deacons are responsible for the intercessions: they may draft and lead the intercessions themselves; or they may draft them and ask a lay person to read them; or they may ask a lay person to draft and read the intercessions. At Solemn Eucharists and other special occasions, the deacon and a sub-deacon or other lay leader may share the intercessions. The deacon begins with a call to prayer; the other leader continues with brief intentions relevant to the occasion (the concerns of the world and the community, the sick and those in need, those who have asked us to pray for them), but *without* responses from the congregation; the deacon then says or sings a litany with congregational responses; and concludes with a collect. A sung litany is effective: simple music is found in *The Book of Alternative Services* (pp. 915-917).

The Prayers of the People are a vital part of the liturgy and it is important that they be carefully prepared and delivered, meaningful, relevant, but not wordy or preachy. Intercessions often leave much to be desired. This is not the place for a detailed discussion of the issue, but deacons can play a role by mentoring and instructing intercessors, leading by example, and preparing intercessions. Deacon Ormonde Plater provides thoughtful and helpful insights into the Prayers of the People, both in *Deacons in the Liturgy*, pp. 41-46, and in a book devoted to the subject: *Intercession: A Theological and Practical Guide*.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ *Deacons in the Liturgy*, 9, 41.

¹⁵⁴ *The Liturgical Ministry of Deacons*, 42.

¹⁵⁵ Michael Kwatera, *Preparing the General Intercessions* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 5, 7-8.

¹⁵⁶ 28, no. 71.

¹⁵⁷ Boston: Cowley Publications, 1995.

Confession and the Peace

After the intercessions, the deacon may give the invitation to confession and begin the confession, if the presiding celebrant so wishes, although the *Book of Alternative Services* assigns this role to the celebrant (p. 191). In the Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer*, “the Deacon or Celebrant says Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor” (p. 360).

In the Anglican and Roman Catholic rites, the presiding celebrant gives the greeting for the Peace: “The peace of the Lord be always with you” (in the Anglican rite this comes just before the offertory; in the Roman rite it comes after the Great Thanksgiving, before Communion). In the Roman rite the deacon invites the people to share the Peace: “Let us offer each other the sign of peace.” Deacon Ormonde Plater recommends the practice for Anglican/Episcopal deacons, using “offer one another a sign of peace” or a similar phrase.¹⁵⁸ This may be especially helpful when there are a lot of visitors or on occasions such as weddings, funerals or baptisms.

******The Preparation of the Table and the Gifts***

Like the Gospel reading, the preparation of the table at the offertory is clearly the prerogative of the deacon. *The Book of Alternative Services* states that “it is the function of a deacon [...] to make ready the table for the celebration, preparing and placing upon it the bread and cup of wine” (p. 183). At the preparation of the gifts, “representatives of the people may present the gifts of bread and wine for the eucharist [...] to the deacon or celebrant before the altar” (p. 192). After the Peace, the deacon stands at the table, assisted, depending on local custom, by a sub-deacon (as is the case at St. Paul’s Cathedral) and/or servers, while the presiding celebrant stands to the side. Ormonde Plater specifies four steps in the preparation of the table and gifts:¹⁵⁹

- i *The deacon prepares the table.* The deacon first ensures that the altar book is in the appropriate place on the altar. He or she then receives chalice, purificator, paten with priest’s host, pall and corporal from the servers. (Some parishes use the traditional burse and veil, the former containing the linens, the latter covering the vessels.) The deacon spreads the corporal on the altar, leaving the chalice and paten to the side. Both *The Book of Alternative Services* (p. 184) and the Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer* (p. 407) recommend that there be only one chalice on the altar. Cruets or a flagon of wine may be used if required to fill additional chalices at the communion.
- ii *The deacon receives the gifts.* In many parishes, representatives of the congregation bring forward the bread, wine and water in an “offertory procession.” (In some parishes, the water is not brought forward and is simply provided by a server.) The deacon (and an assistant) may receive the gifts directly in front of the altar (this is implied by the *BAS*, “before the altar”). The gifts may also be received by servers, who hand them across or bring them around the altar to the deacon (and sub-deacon if applicable). If there is not an offertory procession, servers may bring the gifts from the credence table to the deacon. And if there are no servers, the deacon brings the elements to the altar.
- iii *The deacon prepares the gifts.* The deacon, assisted by a sub-deacon or server with a bread-box, first adds or subtracts wafers as required to or from the ciborium, ensuring that there is a priest’s host on the paten. The deacon then pours wine from the wine cruet into the (single) chalice. At St. Paul’s, we usually have a small wine cruet to be used for a second chalice and, at major services, a flagon for filling additional chalices. The sub-deacon or a second deacon, or in their absence the deacon, adds a little water to the chalice and other vessels containing wine. (William Ditewig notes,

¹⁵⁸ *Deacons in the Liturgy*, 47.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 49-54.

however, that water needs to be added only to the chalice, and in the interest of simplicity this may be preferable if there are several vessels.¹⁶⁰) There has been a custom in some churches for the deacon to bless the water, but this is not required; Ormonde Plater recommends against it, although he does suggest a prayer the deacon may say quietly.¹⁶¹

iv *The deacon places the gifts.* The deacon now places the gifts on the corporal. The ciborium goes on the left and the chalice on the right, covered with the pall. At St. Paul's Cathedral, we place the small wine cruet between the two and the paten (with priest's host) in front of them, close to the celebrant. The collection is then brought forward, received by a server in the alms basin, and placed at the end of the altar. (Customs will vary according to the parish and the preferences of the presiding celebrant.) After the gifts are ready, the deacon steps aside to the right, indicating to the presider that the altar is now prepared. The presider moves to the centre of the altar, having received the lavabo from a server. (If incense is used, the censuring of the altar and gifts takes place just before the lavabo.)



The Offertory: At St. Paul's Cathedral on All Saints' Day, 2011, Deacon Michael Jackson prepares the gifts (step iii), pouring wine into the chalice, assisted by sub-deacon Jan Besse, who adds water. The deacon will then place the vessels on the corporal (step iv). The presiding celebrant, Dean Michael Sinclair, remains at his place until the table is ready.

The Great Thanksgiving

The deacon now assumes his or her normal place to the right of the presider. The deacon (and, at St. Paul's, the sub-deacon on the presider's left) should turn slightly towards the celebrant and not directly face the congregation. For the role of the deacon is to focus on and assist the celebrant, freeing that person to preside without being concerned about logistical details. The deacon always follows the presider's lead in posture and gesture. When the presider bows or makes the sign of the cross, the deacon does so too. The deacon may be asked to turn the pages of the altar book for the presider, having of course ensured in advance that the pages are marked for the propers of the day, the

¹⁶⁰ *The Deacon at Mass*, 76-77.

¹⁶¹ *Deacons in the Liturgy*, 52.

preface (and its music when used), and the eucharistic prayer. Although often presiders place the book to their left – in fact, Ormonde Plater specifies this,¹⁶² at St. Paul’s we deliberately place the book to the presider’s *right* so that the deacon can easily turn the pages. On the other hand, if the presider prefers the book to the left, the deacon can move to that side; as Michael Kwatera says, “a deacon is not glued to one spot; he should move anywhere there is need for his assistance.”¹⁶³



The Great Thanksgiving: the deacon stands on the presiding celebrant’s right and the sub-deacon on his left. Note that the altar book is on the celebrant’s right.

After the *Sanctus* and *Benedictus*, at St. Paul’s the deacon removes the pall from the chalice and stopper from the wine cruet, while the sub-deacon removes the lid from the ciborium (this is not essential, and parishes will adapt their own practices to the vessels they are using and the people at the altar). During the eucharistic prayer, the deacon makes a profound bow at the words of institution of the bread and the wine. According to the presider’s preference, the deacon may raise the chalice at the final doxology while the priest raises the bread. During the *Our Father* (said or sung), it is customary in many churches for the ministers at the altar to extend their hands, palms upwards, in the traditional gesture of prayer (*orans*). After the breaking of the bread and the accompanying sentences, the presider gives the invitation to communion, “The gifts of God for the People of God;” at this point the deacon raises the chalice while the priest raises the bread.



The Invitation to Communion: the deacon raises the chalice, the celebrant the paten, and the sub-deacon the ciborium.

¹⁶² Ibid., 54.

¹⁶³ *The Liturgical Ministry of Deacons*, 45.

Administration of Communion

After the invitation to communion, the deacon, where required, divides the consecrated wafers between the ciboria or patens and pours consecrated wine from cruet or flagon into additional chalices. The vessels are then given to the communion ministers. A long-standing custom has been that the ministers at the altar receive communion first, then administer it to the faithful – indeed, the *Episcopal Book of Common Prayer*, like the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, specifies this. However, at St. Paul’s, the ministers now receive communion at the end. Deacons are traditionally ministers of the cup. At St. Paul’s, lay ministers usually administer the bread and the priest, deacon or sub-deacon administer the chalices. We normally administer communion from two stations on the floor at the front of the nave; this avoids the awkward logistics, and difficulty for the elderly or disabled, of climbing steps into the chancel. Many parishes, however, prefer to retain the traditional practice of administering communion to the people kneeling or standing at the communion rail in the chancel. *Intinction* – the practice of dipping the wafer in the wine – is discouraged in our diocese for health reasons. The deacon may have to tactfully ask communicants to refrain from intinction if they try to do so (they may be invited to touch the base of the chalice if they prefer not to sip from the common cup).

Ablutions

After communion, the ministers return with the vessels and remaining elements. The deacon supervises the ablutions which follow. Practices vary greatly from one parish to another, but the key is that ablutions should be discreet and unobtrusive. For this reason we recommend against doing them at the altar. At St. Paul’s, the ministers gather after communion in the sacristy to consume the remaining elements (or reserve them in the aumbry) and cleanse the vessels with water provided by a server. In some churches it may be practical to do ablutions at the credence table.¹⁶⁴

******Dismissal***

Like the proclamation of the Gospel and the preparation of the table, the Dismissal is one of the “must-do” functions of the deacon. Just as the presiding priest (or bishop) convenes the assembly at the beginning of the eucharistic celebration, so the deacon adjourns the assembly and sends its members into the world. “The deacon,” says William Ditewig, “is the normal minister for the dismissal because it is the deacon who is the sacramental sign of the church’s own diaconal nature in the world.”¹⁶⁵ *The Book of Alternative Services* says that “the deacon, or other leader, dismisses the people” (p. 215). The *Episcopal Book of Common Prayer* specifies “the Deacon, or the Celebrant” (p. 366). A blessing by the presiding celebrant is optional in the Canadian Anglican, the U.S. Episcopal and the Roman Catholic rites, but it is a frequent custom. Liturgically, it is preferable that the Dismissal be given by the deacon immediately after the blessing as the second part of a single action, but some parishes separate the two by a hymn. The deacon is seen in both the Anglican and Roman Catholic rites as an appropriate minister to make announcements, but this responsibility is often shared with the celebrant or lay persons. Announcements, if any, should be brief, useful, and not a repeat of the Sunday bulletin. *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal* puts this neatly: “the Deacon makes brief announcements to the people, if indeed any need to be made, unless the Priest prefers to do this himself.”¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ *The Book of Alternative Services* stipulates that “any remaining consecrated bread and wine (unless reserved for the communion of persons not present) is consumed at the end of the distribution or immediately after the service. This is appropriately done at the credence table or in the sacristy” (184).

¹⁶⁵ *The Deacon at Mass*, 88.

¹⁶⁶ 48, no. 184.

The closing hymn comes next, with procession of the ministers and choir (if present). The Dismissal may come before the hymn or may follow it as the last act of the service. Ormonde Plater says that if a hymn precedes the Dismissal, “with all the liturgical ministers retiring to the front door, the deacon should still remain in front of the people or return to the front to give the dismissal.”¹⁶⁷ *The Book of Alternative Services* provides four recommended options for the Dismissal. The deacon may add brief introductory phrases for special occasions. During the fifty days of Easter, the deacon adds “alleluia, alleluia!” Note that the Dismissal may be sung; tones are found in the *Book of Alternative Services* (p. 924) and Ormonde Plater’s *Music and Deacons* (p. 20).



The Dismissal: the other clergy, servers and choir have processed to the back of the church and the hymn has ended. The deacon and sub-deacon remain in the chancel, where the deacon gives the Dismissal.

Communion from the Reserved Sacrament

This ministry is a delicate one and requires authorization from the parish incumbent or the bishop and adherence to clear guidelines.

Communion of the Sick/Shut-ins

Deacons are historically ministers of communion to the sick, visiting individuals at home or in hospital, although they are not the only ministers to do this. *The Book of Alternative Services* provides in “Ministry to the Sick” (pp. 551-558) for ministers, ordained or not (in the latter case, when authorized by the bishop), to bring the reserved sacrament to the sick person. Note that the *BAS* also permits the anointing of the sick to be done by “clergy [which of course includes deacons] and those lay persons who have received authorization by the diocesan bishop” (p. 555). The *Episcopal Book of Common Prayer* states that “in cases of necessity, a deacon or lay person may perform the anointing, using oil blessed by a bishop or priest” (p. 456).

The Book of Alternative Services, in “Communion under Special Circumstances, For those not present at the celebration” (pp. 256-260), extends the practice to “those who because of work schedules or physical or other types of limitations cannot be present at a public celebration of the eucharist.” It notes that “Justin Martyr, in one of the earliest existing accounts of the Sunday eucharist, tells us that deacons left after the celebration to bring communion to the sick, to the imprisoned, and to those who for any reason were unable to be present at the community eucharist” (p. 256). The service “may be conducted by a priest, or by a deacon or lay person authorized by the diocesan bishop” (p. 257).

¹⁶⁷ *Deacons in the Liturgy*, 61.

Communion in Institutions

Deacons may be called upon to preside at services of communion from the reserved sacrament in care homes, hospitals and seniors' residences. If such a service is authorized, deacons must take care to ensure that the liturgy does not give the appearance of a eucharistic celebration minus the actual words of institution. It should be made clear from the beginning that the consecrated sacrament has been brought from a church where the Eucharist has been previously celebrated. The Diocese of Qu'Appelle has issued a *Service Outline for a Liturgy of the Word and the Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament*. This simple, brief service form is flexible and adaptable to different circumstances. It provides for the gathering; one, two or three readings; a "short reflection by the leader;" Prayers of the People; confession and assurance of pardon; the Peace; distribution of Holy Communion from the reserved sacrament; and the closing.

In this rite, before the distribution of communion, the leader says:

The Church of Christ of which we are members has taken this bread and wine and given thanks according to the Lord's command. We now share in the Communion of Jesus' Body and Blood.

or

This Holy Communion was consecrated at the altar of (*name the Church*) and we share it with you as fellow members of the Body of Christ.

This clarifies the rationale and safeguards the integrity of the ministry of the reserved sacrament.

Reserved Sacrament in a Church

On occasion, deacons may be asked to preside at a service of the Word and Holy Communion from the reserved sacrament in a church. This, however, should only take place in certain circumstances. An example is when a priest is not available in a church where Sunday communion is the norm and people are reluctant to have a liturgy of the Word such as Morning Prayer as the main service. Another example is an isolated church where the sacraments are rarely celebrated. Bishops are reluctant to authorize such services without good reason. The need to clarify and safeguard the integrity of the communion ministry applies here just as much as, if not more so, to services in institutional settings. Services of the Word with communion from the reserved sacrament in churches can be spiritually meaningful and pastorally effective on condition that (a) the deacon presiding is trained and well prepared, (b) the exceptional nature of the liturgy is explained at the beginning of the service, and (c) the liturgy carefully follows the pattern given below.

Soon after the introduction of *The Book of Alternative Services* in 1985, the Anglican Church of Canada issued a form of service for such occasions. Entitled *Public Distribution of Holy Communion by Deacons and Lay Persons*,¹⁶⁸ the booklet emphasizes that "the distribution of holy communion outside of the eucharist is not a substitute for a celebration of the eucharist [...] but it is an opportunity for the eucharist to reach into a context where the required conditions cannot, for the moment, be met." It notes that "there should be a full celebration of the word [...] i.e., everything in the eucharistic rite down to the Prayers of the People..." (p. 3). The service carefully omits the Prayer over the Gifts, the Proper Preface, the *Sanctus* and *Benedictus*, and the Breaking of the Bread. The Peace is immediately followed by the placing of the Gifts on the holy table, the *Our Father*, the invitation to communion, and the distribution of communion.

¹⁶⁸ Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1987.

Other Services

We have dealt so far with the Eucharist and Holy Communion, which incorporate the most frequent diaconal functions in liturgy. However, deacons have roles in other liturgies:

- Deacons may officiate at *Morning and Evening Prayer* and other Liturgies of the Word.
- They assist the bishop in *episcopal liturgies*: ordination, confirmation, blessing of the oils. It is recommended that at least one deacon, and if possible more, attend the bishop at such liturgies. They assist the bishop with the pastoral staff and mitre and hold books where required. When the bishop is the eucharistic presider, the deacon or deacons fulfil their customary assisting roles. Deacons can be helpful in various other ways at ordinations, such as master of ceremonies, litanist, presenters, communion ministers and general assistants.
- Reflecting their involvement in “the world,” deacons have a role in *pastoral liturgies* – baptisms, marriages and funerals, paying special attention to occasional worshippers. Deacons fulfil their normal assisting and collaborative functions in such liturgies, particularly if the Eucharist is part of the service. On occasion, and if authorized by the parish incumbent or the bishop, deacons may preside at baptisms, marriages and funerals (they must have a civil licence for marriages). This may occur in the absence of the priest, or if there is a personal connection with the deacon.
- *Seasonal liturgies*: The liturgies of Holy Week and Easter in *The Book of Alternative Services* assign major duties to the deacon:
 - on *Palm Sunday*, reading the Gospel of the Liturgy of the Palms (p. 298);
 - on *Good Friday*, leading the Solemn Intercession (p. 309); and
 - at the *Easter Vigil*, carrying the paschal candle and singing the *Exsultet* (pp. 322-323).

Deacons may also provide assistance on:

- *Ash Wednesday* in the imposition of ashes;
- *Maundy Thursday* in the foot-washing, in reserving the sacrament, and in supervising the stripping of the altar and furnishings; and
- *Good Friday* in the procession and veneration of the cross.

Blessings

There is a long-standing custom that, while only bishops and priests may bless people, deacons may bless objects, for example, as we have seen, the water at the eucharistic offertory. Ormonde Plater notes that “there is no restriction on informal blessings, which any person may give” and that there has been “a trend to extend blessings to deacons in circumstances of need.” He adds that “deacons (and other eucharistic ministers) sometimes bless children and others who do not receive communion,” bless people in diaconal ministry in prisons and other institutions, and bless animals and objects “mainly when no priest is available or when there is a need for additional ministers.”¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ *Deacons in the Liturgy*, 23-24.

The Book of Alternative Services gives mixed messages on blessings by deacons. At baptisms, it states that deacons may preside “if the ministry of a bishop or priest cannot be obtained” (p. 163). There is no restriction on the deacon blessing the water or on making the sign of the cross (with chrism if desired) on the newly-baptized, for, in both cases, the *BAS* specifically says that *the celebrant*, who may be a deacon, performs these acts (p. 156, p. 160).

In the marriage service, however, *The Book of Alternative Services* states (p. 527) that if a marriage is performed by a deacon, “the nuptial blessing and the blessing on the ring(s) shall be appropriately changed.” While one could appreciate the former, one questions the need to change the form of blessing the rings. In any case, the *BAS* uses the term “celebrant” throughout the service. The *Episcopal Book of Common Prayer*, on the other hand, says that if a deacon presides at a marriage, the nuptial blessing should be omitted (p. 422). It also specifies that “the Priest may ask God’s blessing on a ring or rings” (p. 427). Interestingly, in the Roman Catholic rite, Father Michael Kwatera seems to have no problem with a deacon doing either nuptial or ring blessing at a marriage. Indeed, he says that, for the nuptial blessing, “it is fitting that the deacon lay his hands on the bride’s head, on the groom’s, and over both bride and groom, thus matching this gesture of blessing to the parts of the prayer.”¹⁷⁰

The customs with respect to blessings by deacons are ambiguous. We recommend following Ormonde Plater’s advice: “Since their use of blessings may cause offence and lead to controversy, deacons need to exercise caution and seek advice from the bishop or priest in charge.”¹⁷¹

Conclusion

Why all this attention to the role of deacons in the liturgy? Have we not been able to without them for a long time – and in many cases, still do? While there are many responses to this question, one cannot do better than to cite again Ormonde Plater, leading Episcopal deacon and great liturgist:

*In liturgy, deacons always perform in relationship with others. [...] Deacons enhance the liturgy [and] help all Christians – bishops, priests, deacons, and all the baptized – express baptismal ministry in the life and worship of the church. [...] Deacons are the principal assistants, the most active of all who serve in liturgy. They are heralds of the word, servants of the church, and agents of the bishop. Deacons act for the good of others by setting them free for worship of God and action in the world. [...] they enlist and involve other baptized persons in proper liturgical roles, as in ministries of mercy and justice.*¹⁷²

Deacons are an asset to liturgy. They bring to it collegiality and diversity. They draw on the talents of others in the assembly. They help presiders to preside and assistants to assist. Through their ancient office they link us to worship in the earliest centuries of the church. “Deaconless” liturgies are, of course, frequent, even the norm, in many churches. However, they lack a historic and valuable dimension of the worship of the church. When deacons are available, they should, without question or hesitation, perform their roles in the liturgy. As Deacon Plater puts it, in his inimitable way, “when in doubt, do it!”¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ *The Liturgical Ministry of Deacons*, 64.

¹⁷¹ *Deacons in the Liturgy*, 24.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 4-7.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 5.

Chapter VI Vestments for the Deacon

Introduction

What do deacons wear? The question may seem trivial. After all, ministry is about ministering, not about appearances. And yet many religious traditions have dress codes for their adherents – for example, the *yarmulke* (skull cap) worn by Jewish men or the *hijab* (head scarf) worn by Muslim women. Ordained ministers – rabbis, imams, Christian clergy – often wear some form of distinctive dress, both during worship (liturgical vestments) and outside of worship (street dress). The clerical collar is the best known identifier for Christian clergy for the majority of denominations. Robes such as cassocks and headdress are street wear for clergy in many Orthodox countries. Religious orders have traditionally had some form of “habit.”

What deacons may or should wear is therefore of interest. Dress *outside* of the liturgy is easily dealt with. *Liturgical* dress, on the other hand, is more complex. Let us look at both of these, referring to examples at St. Paul’s Cathedral, Regina.

Street Dress

Should deacons wear clerical collars and if so, when? The use of clerical collars *at all* by deacons, like the title “reverend,” has been questioned. The Anglican custom has been that ordained ministers wear clerical collars when “on duty,” both liturgically and non-liturgically – and this has included deacons. On the other hand, deacons used to be such rare birds that the question hardly arose for them. With the revival of the diaconate as a distinct order, attuned to the “secular” world outside the church institution, wearing clerical garb has been challenged as detracting from the deacon’s identity. James Barnett, for example, said that, “round collars and ‘the Reverend’ are actually countersymbols of the new diaconate, implying as they do a false distinction between the deacon and the laity, implying that the ordained person is somehow more sacred or holy than others.”¹⁷⁴ While the title “reverend” is less and less used for deacons, in favour of “deacon” (Deacon John or Jane Smith), clerical collars are still frequently worn – but normally for liturgy and for specifically-identified forms of diaconal ministry.

William Ditewig, Roman Catholic deacon in the United States, notes the variety of practices in his own Church. Some dioceses, he says, discourage the wearing of the collar by deacons “because they are afraid people might confuse deacons with priests. [...] In other dioceses, deacons may wear the collar at their discretion whenever they are involved in public ministry,” such as prison ministry. “Some deacons are concerned that, without some easily recognizable garb that identifies them as clerics, people will not know that they are deacons and available to serve [...] Other deacons and their bishops find that wearing a clerical collar puts too much distance between the deacon and the people he is to serve.”¹⁷⁵ This sums up the pros and cons of distinctive clerical garb for deacons.

Practice at St. Paul’s Cathedral follows a middle course. Deacons wear the clerical collar, but only when (a) functioning liturgically and (b) exercising a specific diaconal ministry outside the church community, such as hospital visiting, services in seniors’ and special care homes, and officiating at public events such as Remembrance Day.

¹⁷⁴ James Barnett, *The Diaconate: A Full and Equal Order*, 169.

¹⁷⁵ William T. Ditewig, *101 Questions and Answers on Deacons*, 56-57.

Liturgical Vestments for the Deacon¹⁷⁶

Anglican deacons usually vest for sacramental liturgies in one of two ways: *cassock, surplice and stole*; or *alb and stole*. For Morning and Evening Prayer, Anglican deacons wear the black preaching scarf over surplice and cassock; this, of course, makes them indistinguishable from priests – which was of such concern to the Roman Catholic dioceses cited by William Ditewig! Historically, the most distinctive vesture of the deacon has been the *dalmatic*, a knee-length tunic with wide sleeves, in liturgical colours.

Historical Note

In the early church there was no distinctive dress for the clergy: in the Roman Empire they wore the same “classical” garments as others – which included the alb, cope, chasuble and dalmatic. By about the sixth century, however, Roman dress had evolved into different forms, while clergy retained the traditional classical dress. “Christian vestments are then derived primarily from the customary dress of the people of the late Roman Empire.”¹⁷⁷

The alb is the basic liturgical robe, originating from the *tunica alba* (= white tunic), an indoor garment worn in the ancient world. In church use, the alb symbolized the white robe given to new Christians at baptism. It was and is worn under vestments like the chasuble, dalmatic and cope. In some traditions it is worn over the cassock; indeed, the surplice is simply an abbreviated alb. In many churches, the so-called “cassock-alb” has largely replaced cassock and surplice.

The stole also has ancient origins. Some think it came from “a scarf worn over the tunic and chasuble in ancient Rome by senators and consuls as an insignia of their status.”¹⁷⁸ Others suggest it was “a long scarf worn by official persons as messengers,”¹⁷⁹ which made it an appropriate garment for deacons as messengers of the Gospel. The wearing of the stole by deacons appears as early as the fifth and sixth centuries in the East, although it was not prevalent in the West and Rome until the ninth or tenth centuries. Priests, as today, wore the stole as a scarf hanging vertically from the neck in the front on both sides and under the chasuble (if used). However, in the East the diaconal stole (*orarion* in Greek, *orarium* in Latin – from *oro*, “to pray”) was worn over the left shoulder, *over* the tunic (*sticharion*), and straight down front and back – as it still is in many of the Orthodox Churches. (The Council of Toledo in 613 directed that the stole be worn this way so that the deacon’s right hand and arm were left free for service.)

When the *orarium*, or stole (from *stolas*, for “towel” in Greek), was finally adopted in Rome and the West for deacons, it was originally worn *over* the dalmatic, which was the western equivalent of the *sticharion*. Thus the eastern stole and western dalmatic together became the diaconal vestments. Eventually, the diaconal stole was placed *under* the dalmatic; it was then worn crossways and tied under the right arm – which is still the case in most western rite churches.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁶ Helpful summaries of the history and current use of diaconal vestments are found in the following:

William T. Ditewig, *The Deacon at Mass: A Theological and Pastoral Guide*, 34-38, 93-95.

Michael Kwatera, *The Liturgical Ministry of Deacons*, Second Edition, 18-20.

Ormonde Plater, *Deacons in the Liturgy*, Second Edition, 15-19.

More detailed information is provided in James Barnett, *The Diaconate: A Full and Equal Order*, 168-170, 219-225.

¹⁷⁷ James Barnett, *The Diaconate*, 220.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 222.

¹⁷⁹ Michael Kwatera, *The Liturgical Ministry of Deacons*, 18.

¹⁸⁰ See Ormonde Plater, *Deacons in the Liturgy*, 17-18.

The dalmatic is “an ancient vestment associated with a servant”¹⁸¹ and “appears to have originated as a garment of ordinary dress in the province of Dalmatia, being made from the fine wool for which the province was noted.”¹⁸² Its use as an ecclesiastical vestment seems to have become general by the fifth century in Rome, where it was worn by both bishops and deacons. Eventually the custom of the deacon wearing the dalmatic spread across the western church. (The Roman rite still provides formally for bishops to wear the dalmatic under the chasuble at such occasions as ordinations.) Originally dalmatics were decorated with two vertical stripes on either side reaching from top to bottom, front and back, and with two circular stripes on the sleeves. Although this pattern is still found, dalmatics evolved like other vestments and were decorated in a variety of ways. In the traditional “high mass,” the deacon wore a dalmatic with two horizontal stripes, while the sub-deacon wore a very similar garment, the *tunicle*, differentiated from the dalmatic by having only one stripe – a practice still followed in some parishes.



Traditional vestments: the deacon’s dalmatic (left) has two horizontal stripes; the sub-deacon’s tunicle (right) has one.



Contemporary vestments at St. Paul’s Cathedral, Regina: the deacon’s dalmatic (right) has more ornamentation than the sub-deacon’s tunicle (left).

¹⁸¹ William Ditewig, *The Deacon at Mass*, 34.

¹⁸² James Barnett, *The Diaconate*, 223.

The Church of England

We find references to the alb in the First Prayer Book of King Edward VI (1549). At “The Supper of the Lorde and the Holy Communion, commonly called the Masse,” the priest is to wear “the vesture appointed for that ministracion, that is to saye: a white Albe plain, with a vestement or Cope.” Assisting priests and deacons are to wear “likewise the vestures appointed for their ministry, that is to say, Albes with tunacles” (the dalmatic is not mentioned). In the ordinal of 1550, the rubric specifies for the Ordering of Deacons “every one of them, that are presented, hauing upon hym a playne Albe.” A similar phrase is found in the Ordering of Priests. For the consecration of bishops, the ordinal states that the bishop-elect and presenting bishops wear surplice and cope.

These references were omitted from the Second Prayer Book of 1552; indeed, these vestments were prohibited – priests and deacons were “to have and wear a surplice only” and bishops were to wear a rochet. The ordinal of 1552 deletes all references to vestments. However, in the slightly revised Elizabethan prayer book of 1559, we find the following statement: “such Ornaments of the Church, and of the Ministers thereof at all times of their Ministration, shall be retained and be in use, as were in this Church of England by the Authority of Parliament, in the Second Year of the Reign of King Edward the Sixth” – that is, 1549. We are back full circle to the First Prayer Book. However, with some exceptions, albs, copes (and mitres), chasubles, dalmatics and tunicles did not return to use in the Church of England until the catholic revival of the 19th century.

Contemporary Vestments for the Deacon

Alb and stole now tend to be the most usual liturgical vestments for Anglican deacons, although cassock, surplice and stole are still frequently worn. Wearing of the dalmatic is becoming more widespread for the historical reasons mentioned above. Let’s have a look at contemporary usage.

The deacon’s stole should, first of all, not be a priest’s stole tied sideways! This was often the case when deacons were few and far between and vestment makers did not produce specifically diaconal stoles. The situation has changed and genuine deacons’ stoles are now readily available. These stoles are normally wide, appear in the traditional liturgical colours, and are decorated with various symbols. The “Latin” stole is worn crossways over the left shoulder and under the right arm. *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal* specifies that the stole “is worn by the Deacon over the left shoulder and drawn diagonally across the chest to the right, where it is fastened.”¹⁸³ Episcopal deacon Ormonde Plater explains that there are three options for wearing the diaconal stole, all over the left shoulder.¹⁸⁴

1. The Latin style, tied or attached under the right arm – the most frequent western usage.
2. The Eastern style *orarion*, hanging straight down from the left shoulder, in many Orthodox churches.
3. The “Byzantine” style, a long stole (in effect a double *orarion*) worn crossways under the right arm like the Latin stole but with the ends hanging vertically front and back from the left shoulder like the *orarion*. This is the usage in some Orthodox churches and increasingly among Anglican deacons.

¹⁸³ *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 71, no. 340.

¹⁸⁴ *Deacons in the Liturgy*, 17-18.

The dalmatic, historically the deacon's vestment, was worn in the 19th and 20th centuries by the deacon in the Anglo-Catholic "high mass" tradition and at the Roman Catholic solemn high mass (the sub-deacon wore a tunicle). After Vatican II, the solemn high mass was eliminated from the Roman missal. So was the order of sub-deacons. As was the case for deacons' stoles, vestment makers stopped making dalmatics (and tunicles). The revival of the diaconate has resulted in them being made again.

The dalmatic has tended to be reserved for special occasions in both the Anglican and Roman Catholic rites. This, maintains Roman Catholic deacon William Ditewig, is regrettable. In his view, *the deacon should wear the dalmatic whenever the priest wears a chasuble*.¹⁸⁵ Episcopal deacon Ormonde Plater agrees, and adds that deacons should also wear the dalmatic when the priest wears a cope, for example at Solemn Evensong. He notes, however, that "[i]n practice, the dalmatic is often reserved for occasions of great solemnity."¹⁸⁶ Michael Kwatera takes a more restrictive view, reserving the dalmatic for "occasions where greater solemnity is fitting."¹⁸⁷ *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal* states that "the vestment proper to the deacon is the dalmatic, worn over the alb and stole; however, the dalmatic may be omitted out of necessity or on account of a lesser degree of solemnity."¹⁸⁸

Vestments like dalmatics can be expensive and this may be an obstacle for individual deacons; so parishes where there is a deacon should provide matching sets of chasubles and dalmatics – and stoles. One practice should be vigorously discouraged: vesting other people as deacons, whether priests, for example, reading the gospel in the absence of a deacon, or lay persons – the so-called "liturgical deacons" found in some parishes. It would be unthinkable to vest as priests those who are not. The same should apply to the diaconate.

A Case Study: St. Paul's Cathedral, Regina

At St. Paul's Cathedral, the deacons generally follow the guidelines given by Deacons Plater and Ditewig: when the presiding celebrant wears chasuble or cope, the deacon wears the dalmatic – unless one is not available. We have four complete sets of vestments (cope, chasuble, dalmatic, tunicle and stoles), in white, red, green and purple. We hope some generous donor will eventually provide a set in blue! Until that happy day, we vest in alb and stole in Advent. There are both Latin stoles and Byzantine double *orarions* in our four sets of vestments. One of our two deacons prefers the Latin, the other the Byzantine, so both styles are in regular use.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵ *The Deacon at Mass*, 34-36.

¹⁸⁶ *Deacons in the Liturgy*, 17.

¹⁸⁷ *The Liturgical Ministry of Deacons*, 10.

¹⁸⁸ 71, no. 338.

¹⁸⁹ Michael Kwatera states that "[l]iturgical authenticity requires that only a deacon of an Eastern rite should wear an Eastern-style *orarion*" (*The Liturgical Ministry of Deacons*, 19), but we do not see this restriction applying to the Byzantine stole (double *orarion*).



Deacons Winna Martin and Michael Jackson wear respectively a Latin stole and a Byzantine stole (double *orarion*) at St. Paul's Cathedral.

We wear our stoles *over* the dalmatic. Admittedly, this is a rare practice. We do so partly because, as noted above, this was the most ancient tradition, and also because lay sub-deacons assist at most of our eucharistic celebrations. Since in two of the four sets of vestments (white and green) the tunics are identical to the dalmatics, the stole is the distinguishing feature for the deacon. On an antiquarian note, James Barnett tells us: “The Council of Braga, 563, directs the deacons to wear the stole over the shoulder and outside the tunic (dalmatic), so that they will not be confused with the subdeacons.”¹⁹⁰ However, Deacon Ormonde Plater asserts that it is

*confusing for anyone to vest as a subdeacon, a minor order abolished in the Church of England in 1550 and in the Latin Rite of the Catholic Church in 1972; an exception may be made for Anglo-Catholic masses using three sacred ministers.*¹⁹¹

Whether we are antiquarian or innovative in this respect at St. Paul's is open for discussion. We like to think the latter! Our cadre of sub-deacons has been in place since the 1980s and we find this a valuable form of lay liturgical and other ministry.

¹⁹⁰ *The Diaconate*, 223.

¹⁹¹ *Deacons in the Liturgy*, 19.



Modelling the green vestments at St. Paul's Cathedral – made by Thomas Roach of Vancouver, depicting the Saskatchewan prairie landscape – are, from the left, Deacon Winna Martin, wearing the Latin diaconal stole *over* the dalmatic; Dean Michael Sinclair in the chasuble; and sub-deacon Shelly Hawes in the tunicle.



The award-winning white vestment set at St. Paul's Cathedral, made by Saskatchewan artist Martha Cole and depicting the water of baptism. From left to right: Deacon Michael Jackson, wearing the Byzantine stole *over* the dalmatic; Dean Michael Sinclair in the chasuble; and sub-deacon Jan Besse in the tunicle.

Finally, to add another twist, the author, who usually wears Byzantine stoles (over the dalmatic when applicable), adopted a practice he learned from the Romanian Orthodox Church. The double *orarion* is worn as indicated above (crossways and hanging vertically) through the Liturgy of the Word until the offertory. At that point, the two hanging ends are placed crossways on the back, over the shoulder and through the central band at the waist. The author had to have a lesson from an Orthodox priest on how to perform this complicated manoeuvre!



Deacon Michael Jackson models, front and back, the Byzantine red stole as worn from the offertory in the Romanian Orthodox tradition.

Conclusion

For the diaconate, vestments *do* matter. Indeed, all liturgical vestments have a purpose beyond mere ornamentation. Deacon William Ditewig explains this well for his own Roman Catholic tradition; it applies equally to the Anglican tradition:

[W]e are a church that makes rich use of outward signs and other aids to religious imagination and expression. Vestments do many things, including offering a link to our religious heritage. The alb, for example, is a sign and reminder of the white garment of baptism. The stole and dalmatic of the deacon express his servanthood as well as the servanthood of the entire church in the servanthood of Christ, just as the priest's vestments signal the priesthood of the priest and the church in the High Priesthood of Christ. The partnership of priest and deacon thus demonstrates to the assembly the link between priesthood and service; between worship of God and care of neighbor; between Word, sacrament and charity.¹⁹²

Amen!

¹⁹² *The Deacon at Mass*, 37.

Appendix A The Diaconate in Liturgical Texts

Let us see how the deacon's liturgical roles are prescribed – or not prescribed – in some Anglican books of worship: the First Prayer Book of King Edward VI (1549); the *Book of Common Prayer* of the Anglican Church of Canada (1959/1962); the *Book of Common Prayer* of the Episcopal Church in the United States (1979); *The Book of Alternative Services* of the Anglican Church of Canada (1985); *Common Worship* of the Church of England (2000); and also in the 2011 version of the Roman Missal for the Roman Catholic Church.

1. *The First Prayer Book of King Edward VI, 1549*

The first Book of Common Prayer continues the mediaeval assumptions about the diaconate, but at least includes a vestige of the liturgical role of the deacon.

The Supper of the Lorde and the Holy Communion, commonly called The Masse

Decons [...] shall have upon them [...] the vestures appointed for their ministry,
that is to saye, Albes with tunacles. (212)

The priest or deacon shall then reade the Gospel. (214)

If there be a Deacon or other Priest, then shal he folow with the Chalice. (226)

Note: these references are omitted in the Second Prayer Book of 1552.

The Ordering of Deacons

Then one of them appoynted by the Bisshop, shal reade the Gospel of that daye. (301)

2. *The Book of Common Prayer, Canada, 1959/62*

Four hundred years later, the Canadian Book of Common Prayer registers no change in the liturgical function of the deacon. References to the diaconate are cursory.

All Priests and Deacons, unless prevented by sickness or other urgent cause, are to say daily the Morning and Evening Prayer. (Ivi)

In Cathedral and Collegiate Churches, and Colleges, where there are many Priests and Deacons, they shall all receive the Communion with the Priest every Sunday at the least, except they have a reasonable cause to the contrary. (66)

Eucharist

the Deacon or Priest who reads [the Gospel] (71)

[the Priest shall] proceed to deliver [the Communion] to the Bishops, Priests, and Deacons (84)

If there be no Communion, the Priest or Deacon may say... (87)

Baptism

In the absence of a Priest, it is lawful for a Deacon to baptize children. (522)

Note: there is no reference to this "lawful" diaconal act in the baptism of adults.

Ordination – of Deacons

Then one of them, appointed by the Bishop, shall read The Gospel. (643)

And here it must be declared unto the Deacon, that he must continue in that office of a Deacon the space of a whole year (except for reasonable causes it shall otherwise seem good unto the Bishop) to the intent that he may be perfect, and well expert in the things appertaining to the Ecclesiastical Administration. If he has been found faithful and diligent, and has satisfied the Bishop that he is sufficiently experienced in the things belonging to the Ministry, he may be admitted by his Diocesan to the Order of Priesthood... (644)

These references in the ordination rite are taken virtually verbatim from the First and Second Prayer Books of King Edward VI. The Canadian revisers of the mid-20th century were scarcely innovators!

3. The Book of Common Prayer of The Episcopal Church in the United States, 1979

This book, reflecting the early revival of the diaconate in the Episcopal Church, pays considerable attention to the liturgical role of the deacon.

Concerning the Service of the Church

In all services, the entire Christian assembly participates in such a way that the members of each order within the Church, lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons, fulfil the functions proper to their respective orders, as set forth in the rubrical directions for each service. (13)

The leader of worship in a Christian assembly is normally a bishop or priest. Deacons by virtue of their order do not exercise a presiding function; but, like lay persons, may officiate at the Liturgy of the Word [...] Under exceptional circumstances, when the services of a priest cannot be obtained, the bishop may, at discretion, authorize a deacon to preside at other rites also... (13-14)

Proper Liturgies for Special Days

Provision is made for a deacon or lay reader to officiate at the Ash Wednesday and Palm Sunday rites. In the Palm Sunday rite, a Deacon or other person appointed reads the Gospel of the Palms and the deacon starts the procession with Let us go forth in peace. In the Good Friday service, a Deacon or other person appointed leads the Solemn Collects. (264-277)

For the Easter Vigil, we find the following:

It is the prerogative of a deacon to carry the Paschal Candle to its place, and to chant the Exsultet. Deacons likewise assist at Baptism and the Eucharist according to their order. A deacon may also, when the services of a priest cannot be obtained, and with the authorization of the bishop, officiate at public Baptism; and may administer Easter Communion from the Sacrament previously consecrated. (284)

Baptism

If... the ministry of a bishop or priest cannot be obtained, the bishop may specially authorize a deacon to preside. In that case, the deacon omits the prayer over the candidates... and the formula and action which follow. (312)

This is more restrictive of the deacon's role in baptism than the Canadian Book of Alternative Services.

The Holy Eucharist

A deacon should read the Gospel and may lead the Prayers of the People. Deacons should also serve at the Lord's Table, preparing and placing on it the offerings of bread and wine, and assisting in the ministration of the Sacrament to the people. *In the absence of a deacon* [our emphasis], these duties may be performed by an assisting priest. (322 and 354)

In both Rites I and II, the Deacon or Celebrant says the invitation to Confession and gives the Dismissal. The Episcopal book prescribes how a deacon may, at the bishop's discretion, administer communion from the reserved sacrament. (408-409)

Marriage

A deacon, or an assisting priest, may deliver the charge, ask for the Declaration of Consent, read the Gospel, and perform other assisting functions at the Eucharist.

Where it is permitted by civil law that deacons may perform marriages, and no priest or bishop is available, a deacon may use the service which follows, omitting the nuptial blessing which follows The Prayers. (422)

Ordination

- of a Bishop

A Deacon or Priest reads the Gospel... (516)

Deacons prepare the Table (522)

A Deacon dismisses the people. (523)

- of a Priest

the Deacon, or, if no deacon is present, a Priest reads the Gospel. (528)

the Deacon, or a Priest if no deacon is present, dismisses the people. (535)

- of a Deacon

After receiving the Holy Communion, the new deacon assists in the distribution of the Sacrament, ministering either the Bread or the Wine, or both. (536)

A Priest and a Lay Person, and additional presenters if desired, standing before the bishop, present the ordinand. (*Note: curiously, there is no reference to a deacon being one of the presenters.*) (538)

the Deacon, or, if no deacon is present, a Priest reads the Gospel. (540)

The newly-ordained Deacon prepares the bread, pours sufficient wine (and a little water) into the chalice, and places the vessels on the Lord's Table. (546)

The Bishop blesses the people, after which the new Deacon dismisses them. (547)

After participating in the Peace, the deacons go to the Altar for the Offertory. If there are many deacons, some assist in the Offertory and others administer Holy Communion. One, appointed by the bishop, is to say the dismissal. (554)

When desired, deacons may be appointed to carry the Sacrament and minister Holy Communion to those communicants who, because of sickness or other grave cause, could not be present at the ordination.

If the remaining Elements are not required for the Communion of the absent, it is appropriate for the deacons to remove the vessels from the Altar, consume the remaining Elements, and cleanse the vessels in some convenient place. (555)

Celebration of a New Ministry

The new Minister, if a deacon, should read the Gospel, prepare the elements at the Offertory, assist the celebrant at the Altar, and dismiss the congregation. (558)

4. The Book of Alternative Services of the Anglican Church of Canada, 1985

The Book of Alternative Services is surprisingly progressive as far as the diaconate is concerned — progressive in that deacons are not only mentioned but given appropriate roles in almost all liturgies; surprisingly, because in the early 1980s the diaconal movement had not yet gathered as much momentum as in the American Episcopal Church and deacons were few and far between. The compilers of the Book were ahead of their time and Canadian deacons should be grateful.

Morning Prayer

A deacon or lay member of the community may lead the intercessions and thanksgivings. (53)
(*The same phrase is found in Evening Prayer – 70*)

The Service of Light

Deacon, other assistant, or the officiant: (*opening response*)

Thanksgiving

A deacon, or other assistant, or the officiant sings or says, (*response*) (61)

Baptism

It is appropriate that the Gospel be read by a deacon.

If the ministry of a bishop or priest cannot be obtained, a deacon may preside at a public baptism. (163)

Reconciliation of a Penitent

If a deacon or lay person hears a confession, a declaration of forgiveness may be made in the form provided. (166)

Eucharist

A deacon or lay person, *rather than the priest* [our emphasis], is the appropriate minister to lead the Prayers of the People. (176)

It is the function of a deacon [our emphasis] to read the Gospel and to make ready the table for the celebration, preparing and placing upon it the bread and cup of wine. The deacon may also lead the Prayers of the People. (183)

A deacon or member of the community leads the Prayers of the People... (190)

...may lead... (235)

Dismissal

The celebrant may bless the people. The deacon, or other leader, dismisses the people, saying in these or similar words. (215)

Then the deacon or the celebrant says, (249)

Palm Sunday

Then a deacon, a priest, or some other appointed person shall read one of the following.
[Gospel of the Liturgy of the Palms] (298)

In the absence of a bishop or a priest, the preceding service may be led by a deacon or lay person. (299)

Good Friday

Solemn Intercession ... the deacon or other person appointed says to the people... (309)

The biddings may be read by a deacon or other person appointed. (310)

Easter Vigil

It is the prerogative of a deacon [our emphasis] to carry the paschal candle to its place, and to chant the Exsultet. Deacons likewise assist at baptism and the eucharist according to their order. [...] In the absence of a bishop or priest, a deacon or lay reader may lead the first two parts of the service... (321)

The deacon (a priest *if there is no deacon* [our emphasis]) takes the paschal candle, lifts it high, and sings, *The Light of Christ*. [...] The procession enters the church, led by the deacon with the paschal candle. At a suitable place, the deacon lifts the candle high and sings a second time, *The Light of Christ*. [...] The procession continues until the deacon arrives before the altar. Turning to face the people, the deacon sings a third time, *The Light of Christ*.

The deacon, or other person appointed, standing near the candle, sings or says the Exsultet. (322-323)

In the absence of a deacon [our emphasis], the Exsultet may be sung by a priest or by a lay person. (334)

Marriage

When the form of service on page 541 is celebrated by a deacon, the nuptial blessing and the blessing of the ring(s) shall be appropriately changed. (527)

Note: this does not reflect the long-standing tradition that deacons may bless objects, although not people.

Funerals

There are brief references to possible roles for a deacon in Form I: as celebrant (571), leading the Prayers of the People (579), giving the Dismissal (586). Forms II and III do not mention the deacon for the Prayers (593) or the Dismissal (596, 597, 600). Form III stipulates, however, that

The celebrant may be a bishop, priest, deacon, or lay person. (598)

Ordination**- of a Bishop**

Representatives of the presbyterate, diaconate and laity for which the new bishop is to be consecrated, are assigned appropriate duties in the service. (632)

The Presentation ...representatives of the diocese and province (priests, deacons, and lay persons), standing before the archbishop, present the bishop-elect... (634)

The Dismissal A deacon dismisses the people with these words. (641)

Note: the same reference is found in the ordinations of priests (650) and of deacons (658).

- *of a Deacon*

The Presentation A priest and a lay person, and additional presenters if desired, standing before the bishop, present the ordinand... (653)

The liturgy continues with the offertory. The newly ordained deacon prepares the elements and places the vessels on the Lord's Table. The bishop, joined (if possible) by presbyters, presides at the celebration of the eucharist. (657)

Note: It is bizarre that in its rite for ordination of deacons, the deacon-friendly BAS, like the Episcopal BCP, does not provide for deacons as presenters, whereas it does for episcopal ordinations! Nor does it suggest that deacons might join the presiding celebrant at the table.

4. Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England, 2000

The Church of England's liturgical texts reflect its lack of enthusiasm for the diaconate. The Alternative Services Book of 1980 virtually ignores the deacon, who is not mentioned in the eucharistic rites at all (in fact, Rite B specifies that the priest gives the dismissal). In the 1980 ordinal, the declaration states that "a deacon assists the priest under whom he serves... It is his general duty to do such pastoral work as is entrusted to him." (p. 344). Deacons are given no role in the diaconal ordination service.

One would have hoped that twenty years later the Church of England's attitude towards deacons had evolved, especially in the light of the Canadian and American Anglican (and Roman Catholic) liturgical texts. Alas, this was not the case. Common Worship (2000) ignores the deacon almost as much as did its 1980 predecessor. The General Notes for the Eucharist (pp. 158-159) demonstrate the ambivalence of the Church of England towards the diaconate:

In some traditions the ministry of the deacon at Holy Communion has included some of the following elements: the bringing in of the Book of the Gospels, the invitation to confession, the reading of the Gospel, the preaching of the sermon when licensed to do so, a part in the prayers of intercession, the preparation of the table and the gifts, a part in the distribution, the ablutions and the dismissal.

The deacon's liturgical ministry provides an appropriate model for the ministry of an assisting priest, a reader, or another episcopally authorized minister in a leadership ministry that complements that of the president.

When appropriate, the president may [...] delegate the leadership of all or parts of the Gathering and the Liturgy of the Word to a deacon, Reader or other authorized lay person.

In the absence of a priest for the first part of the service, a deacon, Reader or other authorized lay person may lead the entire Gathering and Liturgy of the Word.

Although Common Worship well summarizes the liturgical role of the deacon in the Eucharist, it clearly does not view this as any kind of norm: it is followed "in some traditions," it may provide "an appropriate model" for other ministers, and it is seen as much like that of the Reader.

5. The Roman Missal, 2011

The Roman Catholic Church, with its centralized authority, is very different indeed from the Anglican Communion, which is decentralized not only among but within its component national provinces. The Holy See gives specific liturgical directions, not only for rites (the texts), as do Anglican prayer books, but for ceremonies – movement, posture, gesture, vestments, ornaments and furnishings – which Anglican formularies since the 16th century have only rarely attempted to do and even then, unsuccessfully. *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal*¹⁹³ provides comprehensive commentaries and detailed directions for the eucharistic celebration. While such a publication is inconceivable for Anglicans, it provides valuable insights into liturgical practice.

Roman Catholics do not have the equivalent of *The Book of Common Prayer* or *The Book of Alternative Services*. The Roman Missal itself is the presider's book. Books like the *Catholic Book of Worship* or the *Sunday Missal* usually include the text of the eucharistic rite, or at least the parts of it needed by the congregation; in some cases, the propers (collects, other prayers, readings, psalms); and in others, music and hymns. Some of these books are published in annual editions. For purposes of this study, we refer to the Canadian *Celebrate in Song*¹⁹⁴ as well as to *The General Instruction for the Roman Missal*.

The General Instruction for the Roman Missal

Reflecting both the prescriptive nature of the Roman rite and the greater prevalence of deacons in the Roman Catholic Church, references to deacons abound in *The General Instruction* and it would be pointless to reproduce them all here. References are to the useful numbered sections in *The General Instruction*.

Chapter II. The Structure of the Mass, Its Elements and Its Parts

Gestures and Bodily Posture

42 Among gestures are included also actions and processions, by which the Priest, with the Deacon and ministers, goes to the altar; the Deacon carries the Evangeliary or *Book of Gospels* to the ambo before the proclamation of the Gospel.

The Biblical Readings

#59 The function of proclaiming the readings is by tradition not presidential but ministerial. Therefore the readings are to be read by a reader, but the Gospel by the Deacon, or, in his absence, by another Priest.

The Homily

#66 The Homily should ordinarily be given by the Priest Celebrant himself or be entrusted by him to a concelebrating Priest, or from time to time and, if appropriate, to the Deacon, but never to a lay person.

(Note: the Roman rite, unlike the contemporary Anglican books, clearly provides for occasional preaching by deacons.)

¹⁹³ *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, Canadian edition (Ottawa: Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011).

¹⁹⁴ *Celebrate in Song*, pew edition (Ottawa: Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011).

The Universal Prayer

#71 [The intentions] are announced from the ambo or from another suitable place, by the Deacon or by a cantor, a reader, or one of the lay faithful.

The Fraction of the Bread

#83 The Priest breaks the Eucharistic Bread, with the assistance, if the case requires, of the Deacon or a concelebrant.

(Note: there is no such reference in Anglican prayer books.)

Chapter III. Duties and Ministries in the Mass*The Duties of Those in Holy Orders*

#94. After the Priest, the Deacon, in virtue of the sacred Ordination he has received, holds first place among those who minister in the celebration of the Eucharist. For the sacred Order of the Diaconate has been held in high honour in the Church even from the early times of the Apostles. At Mass the Deacon has his own part in proclaiming the Gospel, from time to time in preaching God's Word, in announcing the intentions of the Universal Prayer, in ministering to the Priest, in preparing the altar and in serving the celebration of the Sacrifice, in distributing the Eucharist to the faithful, especially under the species of wine, and from time to time in giving instructions regarding the people's gestures and postures,

(Note: this is both a succinct and a complete description of the deacon's role at the Eucharist. One could only wish that something similar appeared in Anglican prayer books!)

Chapter IV. The Different Forms of Celebrating Mass*Mass with the People*

#116. If at any celebration of Mass a Deacon is present, he should exercise his function.

(note: well said!)

This section includes sub-sections A) Mass without a Deacon, and B) Mass with a Deacon. The latter is so significant that we reproduce it in its entirety.

B) Mass with a Deacon

171. When he is present at the celebration of the Eucharist, a Deacon should exercise his ministry, wearing sacred vestments. In fact, the Deacon:

- a) assists the Priest and walks at his side;
- b) ministers at the altar, both as regards the chalice and the book;
- c) proclaims the Gospel and may, at the direction of the Priest Celebrant, give the Homily (d. no. 66);
- d) guides the faithful people by giving appropriate instructions, and announces the intentions of the Universal Prayer;
- e) assists the Priest Celebrant in distributing Communion, and purifies and arranges the sacred vessels;
- f) carries out the duties of other ministers himself, if necessary, when none of them is present.

The Introductory Rites

172. Carrying the *Book of Gospels* slightly elevated, the Deacon precedes the Priest as he approaches the altar or else walks at the Priest's side.

173. When he reaches the altar, if he is carrying the *Book of Gospels*, he omits the sign of reverence and goes up to the altar. It is a praiseworthy practice for him to place the *Book of Gospels* on the altar, after which, together with the Priest, he venerates the altar with a kiss.

If, however, he is not carrying the *Book of Gospels*, he makes a profound bow to the altar with the Priest in the customary way and with him venerates the altar with a kiss.

Lastly, if incense is being used, he assists the Priest in putting some into the thurible and in incensing the cross and the altar.

174. Once the altar has been incensed, the Deacon goes to the chair together with the Priest and there stands at the Priest's side and assists him as necessary.

The Liturgy of the Word

175. During the singing of the *Alleluia* or other chant, if incense is being used, the Deacon ministers to the Priest as he puts incense into the thurible. Then, bowing profoundly before the Priest, he asks for the blessing, saying in a low voice, *Your blessing, Father*. The Priest blesses him, saying, *May the Lord be in your heart*. The Deacon signs himself with the Sign of the Cross and replies, *Amen*. Having bowed to the altar, he then takes up the *Book of Gospels* which was placed on it and proceeds to the ambo, carrying the book slightly elevated. He is preceded by a thurifer carrying a smoking thurible and by ministers with lighted candles. At the ambo the Deacon greets the people, with hands joined, saying, *The Lord be with you*. After this, at the words *A reading from the holy Gospel*, he signs with his thumb the book and then himself on his forehead, mouth, and breast. He incenses the book and proclaims the Gospel reading. When this is done, he acclaims, *The Gospel of the Lord*, and all reply, *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ*. He then venerates the book with a kiss, saying quietly the formula *Per evangelica dicta* (*Through the words of the Gospel*); and returns to the Priest's side.

When the Deacon is assisting the Bishop, he carries the book to him to be kissed, or else kisses it himself, saying quietly the formula *Per evangelica dicta* (*Through the words of the Gospel*). In more solemn celebrations, if appropriate, the Bishop may impart a blessing to the people with the *Book of Gospels*.

Lastly, the Deacon may carry the *Book of Gospels* to the credence table or to another suitable and dignified place.

176. Moreover, if there is no other suitable reader present, the Deacon should proclaim the other readings as well.

177. After the introduction by the Priest, it is the Deacon himself who announces the intentions of the Universal Prayer, usually from the ambo.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

178. After the Universal Prayer, while the Priest remains at the chair, the Deacon prepares the altar, assisted by the acolyte, but it is the Deacon's place to take care of the sacred vessels himself. He also assists the Priest in receiving the people's gifts. After this, he hands the Priest the paten with the bread to be consecrated, pours wine and a little water into the chalice, saying quietly, *By the mystery of this water*, etc. and after this presents the

chalice to the Priest. He may also carry out the preparation of the chalice at the credence table. If incense is being used, the Deacon assists the Priest during the incensation of the offerings, the cross, and the altar; and after this the Deacon himself or the acolyte incenses the Priest and the people.

179. During the Eucharistic Prayer, the Deacon stands near the Priest, but slightly behind him, so that when necessary he may assist the Priest with the chalice or the Missal.

From the epiclesis until the Priest shows the chalice, the Deacon usually remains kneeling. If several Deacons are present, one of them may place incense in the thurible for the Consecration and incense the host and the chalice at the elevation.

180. At the concluding doxology of the Eucharistic Prayer, the Deacon stands next to the Priest, and holds the chalice elevated while the Priest elevates the paten with the host, until the people have acclaimed, *Amen*.

181. After the Priest has said the prayer for the Rite of Peace and the greeting *The peace of the Lord be with you always* and the people have replied, *And with your spirit*, the Deacon, if appropriate, says the invitation to the Sign of Peace. With hands joined, he faces the people and says, *Let us offer each other the sign of peace*. Then he himself receives the Sign of Peace from the Priest and may offer it to those other ministers who are nearest to him.

182. After the Priest's Communion, the Deacon receives Communion under both kinds from the Priest himself and then assists the Priest in distributing Communion to the people. If Communion is given under both kinds, the Deacon himself administers the chalice to the communicants; and, when the distribution is over, standing at the altar, he immediately and reverently consumes all of the Blood of Christ that remains, assisted, if the case requires, by other Deacons and Priests.

183. When the distribution of Communion is over, the Deacon returns to the altar with the Priest, collects the fragments, should any remain, and then carries the chalice and other sacred vessels to the credence table, where he purifies them and arranges them as usual, while the Priest returns to the chair. Nevertheless, it is also permitted to leave vessels needing to be purified on a corporal, suitably covered, on the credence table, and to purify them immediately after Mass, following the Dismissal of the people.

The Concluding Rites

184. Once the Prayer after Communion has been said, the Deacon makes brief announcements to the people, if indeed any need to be made, unless the Priest prefers to do this himself.

185. If a Prayer over the People or a formula of Solemn Blessing is used, the Deacon says, *Bow down for the blessing*. After the Priest's blessing, the Deacon, with hands joined and facing the people, dismisses the people, saying, *Ite, missa est (Go forth, the Mass is ended)*.

186. Then, together with the Priest, the Deacon venerates the altar with a kiss, makes a profound bow, and withdraws in a manner similar to the Entrance Procession.

“Celebrate in Song”

The “pew edition” of this book is the nearest equivalent to the Anglican *Book of Alternative Services* for the eucharistic rite. It gives the text of the liturgy, music and hymns for the mass, and eucharistic prayers. References to the deacon are as follows:

Penitential Act

(11)

The Priest, or a Deacon or another minister, then says the following or other invocations with *Kyrie, eleison (Lord, have mercy)*:

The Liturgy of the Word

The directions for the deacon are specific:

Gospel Acclamation

(14-15)

There follows the Alleluia or another chant laid down by the rubrics, as the liturgical time requires. Meanwhile, if incense is used, the Priest puts some into the thurible. After this, the Deacon who is to proclaim the Gospel, bowing profoundly before the Priest, asks for the blessing, saying in a low voice:

Your blessing, Father.

The Priest says in a low voice:

May the Lord be in your heart and on your lips, that you may proclaim his Gospel worthily and well, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, + and of the Holy Spirit.

The Deacon signs himself with the Sign of the Cross and replies: Amen.

[Here follow instructions for the priest in the absence of a deacon.]

The Deacon, or the Priest, then proceeds to the ambo, accompanied, if appropriate, by ministers with incense and candles. There he says:

The Lord be with you.

The people reply:

And with your spirit.

Gospel

(15-16)

The Deacon, or the Priest:

A reading from the holy Gospel according to *N*.

And, at the same time, he makes the Sign of the Cross on the book and on his forehead, lips, and breast. The people acclaim:

Glory to you, O Lord.

Then the Deacon, or the Priest, incenses the book, if incense is used, and proclaims the Gospel. At the end of the Gospel, the Deacon, or the Priest, acclaim: The Gospel of the Lord.

All reply: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

The he kisses the book, saying quietly:

Through the words of the Gospel may our sins be wiped away.

Homily

(16)

The follows the Homily, which is to be preached by a Priest or Deacon on all Sundays and Holydays of Obligation; on other days, it is recommended.

(Note: the deacon is shown here as a normal preacher.)

Preparation of the Gifts

(19)

The Deacon, or the Priest, pours wine and a little water into the chalice, saying quietly:

By the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ
Who humbled himself to share in our humanity.

(Note: despite the direction given in The General Instruction, #178, there is no mention here of the deacon preparing the altar.)

Sign of Peace

(25)

Then, if appropriate, the Deacon, or the Priest, adds:

Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

And all offer one another a sign, in keeping with local customs, that expresses peace, communion, and charity. The Priest gives the sign of peace to a Deacon or minister.

The Concluding Rites

(30)

Then the Deacon, or the Priest himself, with hands joined and facing the people, says:

Go forth, the Mass is ended.

Or:

Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.

APPENDIX B

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA – VOCATIONAL DIACONATE STATISTICS 2014

DIOCESE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	ACTIVE	RETIRED	CAND.
Algoma	3		3	3		
Anglican Parishes C.I.	9	3	6	5	4	
Arctic (Inactive)	15	7	6	13	2	
Athabasca (2013)	3	2	1	3		1
Brandon (Inactive)	4	2	2	4		
British Columbia	13	2	11	9	4	2
Caledonia (2013)	4	1	3	4		
Calgary (2011)	7	3	4	7		
Central Nfld (2013 – inactive)	1		1			
Eastern Nfld/Labrador	21	10	11	20	1	
Edmonton (2013)	8	2	6	8	2	
Fredericton	12	1	11	11	1	7
Huron	36	18	18	31	5	3
Keewatin (1)	1		1	1		
Kootenay	10	3	7	8	2	
Mishamikoweesh (1)	20	4	16	20		
Montreal	8	4	4	7	1	
Moosonee (2)	3		3	3		
New Westminster (3)	36	18?	18?			14
Niagara	18	8	9	17	1	3
Nova Scotia & PEI	12	2	10	11	1	1
Ontario	11	6	5	9	2	
Ottawa	3	1	1	2	1	
Qu'Appelle	9	2	7	8	1	
Quebec	8	3	5	5	3	
Rupert's Land	12	3	9	12		4
Saskatchewan (inactive)						
Saskatoon (inactive)						
Toronto	45	11	34	33	12	2
Western Nfld	2	1	1	1	1	
Yukon	6	1	5	5	1	
TOTALS	340	117	223	295	45	37

NOTES:

A year after the diocese indicated the last year for which we received data.

- (1) The diocese of Keewatin was split in early 2014 to create the Indigenous Spiritual; Ministry of Miushamikoweesh with its own Aboriginal bishop; deacons split between them arbitrarily based on geography.
- (2) Moosonee ceased to be an independent diocese at the end of 2013 and is now an indigenous mission area responsible to the Archbishop of Toronto/Metropolitan of Ontario
- (3) For legal reasons, New Westminster provides total deacons only with no details at all; gender split based on past proportions.

*Source: Deacon Jacquie Bouthéon
Association of Anglican Deacons in Canada
October 2014*

Appendix C

Diaconal Formation in the Diocese of Toronto

STEPS TO ORDINATION

1. When a parish is interested in the diaconate, the incumbent contacts the area bishop and, with his/her permission, asks the Coordinator of Deacons to come and speak with the parish. The Coordinator will outline the steps to ordination, describe the diaconate, and outline other requirements for ordination. If the applicant is self-identified, then he/she needs to discuss the diaconate with his/her incumbent and everything conforms to the process above.
2. If there is a feeling that the process should continue from this point, then the incumbent should fill out the application form for permission from the area bishop to start a discernment committee.
3. With permission of the bishop, the parish sets up a Parish Discernment Committee and a mentor is appointed by the Coordinator to help the PDC through their process. The mentor is involved directly in providing questions for the PDC to consider. The PDC considers (a) if the parish supports the idea of a deacon in the parish, and (b) which parishioners might be considered. The first vestry vote is held regarding whether or not the parish supports a diaconal role in the parish.
4. If that passes, then the parish considers any candidates. Anyone considered should be able to articulate his/her particular diaconal ministry to the outside world. If the PDC identifies one candidate or more, the discernment process should explore the call of those individuals. After all of this, the PDC will nominate the person(s) to be considered to the second vestry meeting.
5. If the vestry meeting confirms the nomination (Postulant), the area bishop is informed and the Coordinator will be contacted for the application form (for the individual). When the application is completed, the Coordinator will arrange for the Diocesan Discernment process to begin. This can be a lengthy process involving police and medical checks, required workshops, etc.
6. When the above is completed, the individual joins the Community of Deacons, and begins formation. Formation will include discussions, reading, and education about the diaconate. When formation is concluded, the candidate's name is put forward to the area bishop for approval (it should be noted that the bishop may suspend or end the process at any point in these steps up to the actual ordination).
7. If the bishop approves, a date for ordination is set and other paperwork is completed. (Ordinand)
8. One should expect the process to take at least three years from the start.

Academic Requirements for Ordination to Diaconate

Ten Units in total are required:

Six Units on a religious base:

- ◊ Old Testament
- ◊ New Testament
- ◊ Basic Theology
- ◊ Church History
- ◊ Homiletics
- ◊ Practice of Ministry or Social Justice or Liturgy

Four Units that include training for a particular diaconal ministry. This may include, for example, all courses for a nursing degree, or courses on gerontology for those working with the elderly, or CPE courses for those in chaplaincy. Other possibilities may be:

- ◊ Anglican history
- ◊ Social Justice (if not done above)
- ◊ Church music
- ◊ Practice of Ministry (if not done above)
- ◊ Liturgy (if not done above)
- ◊ Pastoral care
- ◊ Counselling
- ◊ Further courses on any of the six topics above.

Some knowledge of Canon Law would be profitable.

◊ A "Unit" is defined for these purposes as completion of a course of roughly 20 hours.

Having a M.Div., or a Diploma in Lay Ministry, or similar diploma is taken as fulfilling these requirements at present. However, any candidate should also make sure that he/she has training or education appropriate for his/her diaconal ministry.

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