



Archdeacon and Deacon Director's Conference Spring 2013 Open Space Notes

What to tell priests about deacons Rod Dugliss

Seminarians did not usually interact with deacon postulants because of different schedules (week day and weekend)

School for Deacons is now taking over field education for seminarians - field placement and two two-hour sessions.

1st: Seminarians need to re-read the ordination rite for deacons and Pam Nesbitt's article on the psychology of the transitional diaconate.

How can seminarians be informed, understanding and willing to work in a team with a deacon in a parish.

Suggestons:

- Talk about the waves of development of the diaconate as an order. Show how the diaconate has changed over the time: what pieces, as a transitional deacon, do you see you fulfilling from this description?
- In the context of ordained ministries in the Episcopal Church -- a bishop speaks, a priest speaks, a deacon speaks.
- review the canons on each order and see how they are different
- problem: transitional diaconate is very different from the vocational diaconate -- they need to say "yes" to if they are truly called to be a deacon
- Be loving and accepting -- don't be defensive and say what they are doing is not diaconal. Reduce anxiety about changes. Go out of our strengths.
- Problem: as a transitional deacon, you are ordained without much responsibility attached.
- Explore: what does it mean to be a full and equal order?
- Don't be afraid of deacons. Try to understand the pressures they are under: facing very uncertain future: part-time job? Full-time with insufficient pay?
- Suggest that there is something to be learned from making a call work when you may have to work another job -- deacons might be a resource.
- Sometimes transitional deacons are named deacons in charge of parishes.
- Priest is called to gather people at altar, deacon is called to send them out into the community to do their work.

- Priests door to tabernacle, deacons door to church. Explain why everything we do at the altar is related to what we do in the world.
- All ministries fall within the covenant of baptismal gifts. Maybe shouldn't be "hung up with the order" -- aside from the canonical requirement-- and consider the gifts of each member of the team -- priests and deacons.
- ask seminarians understand the differences between "vocation" and "profession." Profession having to do with how I am recognized and paid; vocation is what I am called to do. See Chrism magazine from England.
- Problem: seminarians are about two generations younger than the average deacon.
- Problem: today's young seminarians often grow up in an unchurched culture. So priests seem more and more archaic, whereas deacons deal more with the world.
- Talk about other professions that have an intangible gift -- artists, musicians, writers -- who cannot make their living by doing what they feel called to, must supplement their income with other jobs.
- best practices in working with a deacon
- Ask priests who are already priests to talk about how your understanding of the priesthood has changed.
- Talk about how deacons who have jobs in the world as well as their so-called ministry -- it's all their ministry -- may help young priests who might be bi-vocational consider how their other job fits into living out their call in all parts of their lives.
- Use team sport analogy of relation between priest and deacon. "partnership relationship" Think of a dance.
- Think of all orders being a circle around the altar.
- It's all about building relationships with deacon assigned to you. "For the sake of the Gospel, let's work together."
- Game: orders in the "fishbowl" -- priest, deacon, lay person. Primary conversation between the priest and the deacon.