



ASSOCIATION FOR EPISCOPAL DEACONS

ENGAGING THE DIAKONIA OF ALL BELIEVERS

2017 Archdeacon & Deacon Directors Conference Open Space Report: Deacon Mentoring

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Shared experiences

- New Westminster: Take into account what a good fit would be – loose and informal mentoring process, does not continue after ordination
- Michigan: advisor who stays with them through discernment but not after ordination
- Northern California: COM assigns liaison who stays with them until ordination; no structure for newly ordained people; now looking at a more structured program
- In nursing: very structured, collegial. Stressed that structure is important: regular meetings, basic questions, mentor is trained, accountable to director of nursing
- Texas: Discovered it was better to have deacons mentor deacons. Priests were mentoring but they were more likely to want to “clone”
- New Jersey: mentor is assigned during process; companion; available for questions and wonderings about the diaconate. Discovered need for a definite process with structure
- Connecticut: Deacons Council meets monthly, but deacon mentors will meet four times a year. Invitational for those in formation which allows them to build relationship; having conversation to have people network together
- Olympia: “mentor glut”. Members of Commission on ministry – liaisons; Iona program has mentorship; no formal program beyond ordination; self-mentoring program
- Kentucky: geographically large but small number of congregations. Archdeacon does mentoring herself, builds relationships among deacons while they are in formation in school, then pairs deacons according to good fit.
- Mississippi: at beginning of school, assigned a mentor; mentor assigned in internship; hurdle is training; not well structured
- Kansas: doesn't have a formal mentoring program; talking about it in Kemper School – the 4 bishops are in conversation; try to assigned newly ordained deacons to places where priests are deacon-friendly

Issues:

- People who have been acting as mentors resist being told they now need training
- Deacons in formation placed in internships with priests, no deacons, who really don't comprehend the diaconate
- Many are in mentor relationship up to ordination, but not beyond.
- People in the process who are not encouraged to be ordained
 - How can they be mentored through a new ministry?



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Needs and questions:

- What should the process include?
- Mentors need training
- What are guidelines around what mentors can share in conversations with mentor gatherings
- Structure
- Community of Faith Discernment Process
- Is there a job description for a mentor?
 - Suggestion: Maylanne's school's website
 - Suggestion: Google it!
- Does anyone use mentoring at points of transition? (Change of parish or ministry, retirement)
 - Suggestion: Deacons should attend Fresh Start (or whatever is in place)
 - Suggestion: formation of support group by the deacon

Terms that were used

- Mentor
- Learning facilitator
- Liaison
- Advisor
- Coach
- Shepherds

Maylanne: "Mentoring is support in times of transition, inducting people into new roles and places."