



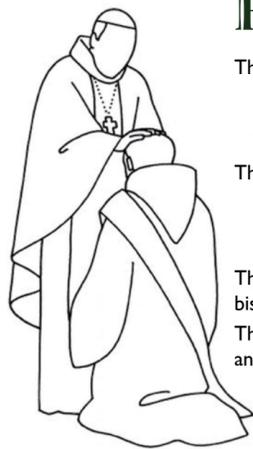
Holy Orders

There are three degrees of apostolic ministry:
 Bishop
 Priest
 Deacon

The Sacrament of Holy Orders
 - configures the recipient to Christ
 - by a special gift of the Holy Spirit
 - so that he may serve the Church

The deacon serves in communion with and under the authority of his bishop and priest.

The service of the diaconate consists in the service of the word, the liturgy and charity – these three are inseparably joined.



THE DIACONATE



Service of the Liturgy

LITURGIES: the deacon will assist the bishop and priest during liturgies

- the deacon is an ordinary minister of holy communion and will assist the priest in distributing the Body of Christ to the faithful;
- the deacon may assist in administering viaticum;
- the deacon is an ordinary minister of exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and of Eucharistic benediction;
- the deacon may direct liturgies of the Word and preside at worship and prayers of the people when a priest is not present;

BAPTISM: the deacon, together with bishop and priest, is the ordinary minister of baptism

- in this service the deacon acts by delegation of the priest.

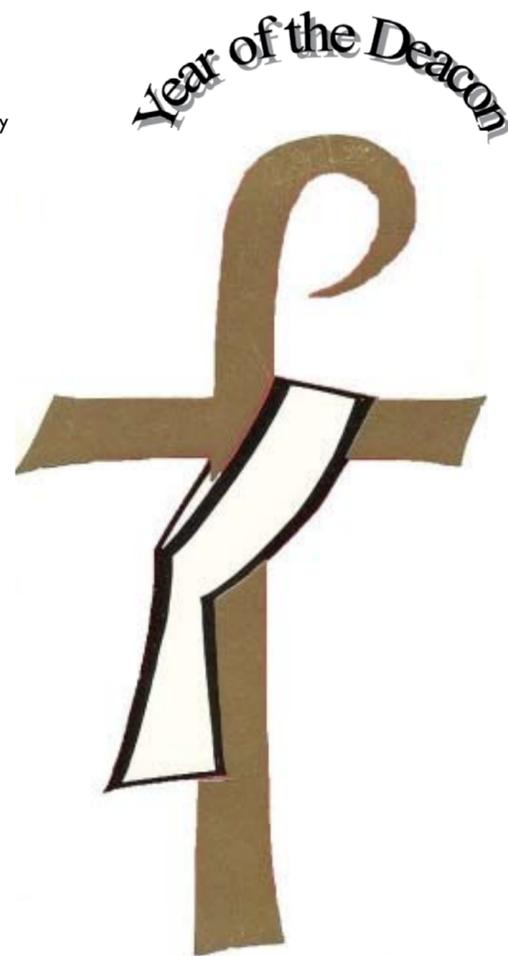
MARRIAGES: The deacon may assist at marriages and pronounce the nuptial blessing in the name of the Church

- in this service the deacon acts by delegation of the priest.

FUNERALS: The deacon may lead funeral services; The deacon is the minister of sacramentals and may, in the absence of a priest, impart blessings of people and objects

The Faculties of the Deacon:

- to preach and catechise
- to celebrate the sacraments of Baptism and Matrimony
- to preside over Communion Services outside Mass
- to bring Holy Communion to the faithful
- to administer sacramentals
- to officiate at funerals and burial services



Service of Charity

Deacons should conform themselves to the likeness of Christ the Servant.

- they should be dedicated to works of charity and administration.

(From the prayer of Ordination) the bishop implores the Father that they be 'full of all the virtues, sincere in charity, solicitous towards the weak and the poor, humble in their service... may they be the image of your Son, who came not to be served but to serve.'

- diocesan and parish works of charity may be entrusted to deacons;
- deacons are to serve all the faithful, with particular care for the suffering;
- the pastoral care of the sick may be entrusted to deacons;
- deacons may act as chaplains to, e.g. schools, hospitals, prison ministry.

Service of the Word

At ordination, the bishop gives the Book of Gospels to the deacon, saying, 'Receive the Gospel of Christ whose herald you have become.'

- it is the duty of the deacon to proclaim the Gospel and preach God's Word faithfully
- it is the role of the deacon to catechize God's people at all stages of living
- deacons are to give witness to Christ through their personal and professional conduct, especially their witness in the workplace and secular life
- the deacon's ministry is linked with the missionary, evangelical nature of the Church – a mission to bring Christ to others
- the deacon serves in Christian education: in training, in youth groups and other lay groups, and in promoting the Christian life in all its phases

