

SECTION 2: DEACONS

The following policies shall be followed by deacons in the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

2.1 FACULTIES

In accordance with the provisions of canon law, the Archbishop grants the following faculties to deacons, to be exercised subject to the pastor of the parish where the deacon is appointed:

2.1.1 BAPTISM

According to Canon 861, “The Ordinary minister of baptism is a bishop, a presbyter or a deacon ...”
Deacons are granted the faculty to administer the sacrament of baptism to “infants,” defined by Canon 97§2 as “a minor before the completion of the seventh year.”

Deacons are not granted the faculty to administer the sacrament of baptism to those seven and older. According to *The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (U.S. Statutes #18): “Children who have reached the age of reason are considered for purposes of initiation, to be adults (refer to Canon 852§1.) Their formation should follow the general pattern of the ordinary catechumenate as far as possible, with the appropriate adaptations permitted by the ritual. They should receive the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist at the Easter Vigil, together with the older catechumens.”

Therefore, anyone who has reached the age of seven is to be baptized and confirmed as part of their initiation into the Church. Because liturgical law gives the faculty to confirm to the priest who welcomes the person into the Church, and because the celebration of baptism and confirmation must be celebrated by the same priest in order for the confirmation to be valid, a deacon may not baptize anyone seven and older.

2.1.2 EUCHARIST

Deacons are granted the faculty to:

- Distribute Holy Communion (Canon 910)
- Bring Holy Communion to the sick in the form of viaticum in the case of necessity or with at least the proper presumed permission (Canon 911)
- Conduct the rite of the administration of Holy Communion outside of mass observing the liturgical rites (Canon 918)
- Dispense, in individual cases and for a just reason, from the Eucharistic abstinence (Canon 919§1)
- Expose the most holy sacrament and give the Eucharistic benediction (Canon 943).

2.1.3 PREACHING

Deacons are granted the faculty to preach the Word of God, including the homily at the sacred liturgy (Canons 764 and 765). This faculty is granted by the universal law of the Church and is to be exercised with the permission of the Priest Celebrant. This faculty permits a deacon to preach throughout the

world unless a particular Diocese has required that deacons receive expressed permission to preach there.

2.1.4 MATRIMONY

Deacons are granted the faculty to:

- Conduct the required pre-marital investigation and preparation for marriage and administer the necessary oaths.
- Assist at marriages within the parish or other territory or church in which the deacon is generally or specifically delegated by the local pastor, or the ordinary of the place (Canons 1109-1111). This faculty allows deacons to assist at all marriages within the limits of the assigned parish territory (Canon 1109). If the deacon's is a personal parish, he may validly assist within the confines of the jurisdiction at marriages when at least one of the parties is the deacon's parishioner (Canon 1110). The Pastor may delegate or the Parochial Vicar or deacon may sub-delegate a priest or deacon to assist at marriages; this must be expressly given to a specific person for a specific marriage (Canons 1111§2, CANON 137§3, §4). This faculty gives to the Pastors, Parochial Vicars and deacons of personal parishes established for one race the delegation for the marriage of those of other races who are considered members of that parish. All deacons assisting at marriages in the Archdiocese are to follow the policies and guidelines as established by the Bishops of Louisiana for the preparation of couples for this sacrament.
- Act as procurator-advocate in the processes for declaration of nullity and dissolution of the bond.

2.1.5 FUNERALS

Deacons are granted the faculty to:

- Conduct wake vigil and related rites and prayers.
- Conduct the funeral liturgy.
- Conduct the rite of final commendation.
- Conduct the rite of committal.

2.1.6 SACRAMENTALS

Deacons are granted the faculty to:

- Administer sacramentals and ritual blessings in accord with the norms of the liturgical books (Canon 1168).
- Administer the blessings which are expressly permitted by deacons as indicated in the book of blessings (Canon 1169§3).

2.2 ATTIRE FOR DEACONS

The appropriate official public attire for the permanent deacon is the ordinary business suit. Clerical attire (roman collar vest or clerical shirt) is not to be worn under any circumstances. For liturgical functions, the appropriate vestments for the deacon are: alb, stole and dalmatic for solemn occasions. For wake services, alb and stole are to be worn or a business suit.

2.3 STATUS

Four categories delineate the status of deacons:

2.3.1 ACTIVE:

- Assignment by canonical appointment
- Faculties unencumbered

Deacons who serve in active ministry with a canonical appointment serve with the pagella of faculties granted at ordination and are free to serve in all areas of ministry unless some faculties have been restricted.

2.3.2 RETIRED:

- Released from canonical appointment
- Occasional service
- Faculties unencumbered

Deacons who retire are released from canonical appointment. The pagella of faculties granted at ordination remain unencumbered and they are free to serve in all areas of ministry unless some faculties have been restricted.

2.3.3 LEAVE OF ABSENCE (personal, sabbatical, medical):

- Temporarily relieved of canonical appointment
- Granted by the Archbishop for a specific period of time
- Faculties may be encumbered

Deacons may take a leave of absence for various personal reasons. While they may remain in their canonical appointment during the leave of absence, they are temporarily relieved of the responsibilities of the canonical appointment. The pagella of faculties granted at ordination may not or may be encumbered.

2.3.4 INACTIVE:

- Action undertaken in consultation for various reasons
- Faculties revoked

Deacons who are inactive do not participate in ministry at any level. There is no canonical appointment and the pagella of faculties granted at ordination are revoked.

2.4 RETIREMENT POLICY

The Christian's call to ministry is a lifetime vocation and the character imprinted through the Sacrament of Holy Orders is clearly permanent. With the demands of ministry, a deacon's physical, mental and emotional capacity can diminish with age or even become burdensome. It is also apparent that the diminishment that accompanies advancing age may vary greatly from person to person. This policy is not intended to imply that retiring deacons are not capable of serving in the ministry or that they are unable to exercise the faculties granted at ordination. Rather, the purpose is to assist in facilitating the retired deacon's ministerial service according to their willingness, ability and choice in consultation with the Permanent Diaconate Personnel Board and The Director of the Permanent Diaconate. After considering the recommendations presented to him, the Archbishop makes the determination of the deacon's status.

2.4.1 POLICIES

- a. The normal retirement age for a deacon is seventy-five (75) years of age. Before his seventy-fifth birthday, the deacon is to send a letter to the Archbishop tendering the possibility of his retirement.
- b. The deacon may request an extension of his assignment. After consultation, the Archbishop will decide whether to extend the deacon's assignment or accept his retirement.
- c. Extensions are granted for one year at a time. Each successive year, after age seventy-five, the deacon must send a letter to the Archbishop requesting an extension.
- d. If the offer of retirement is accepted by the Archbishop, the deacon will be relieved of his Canonical Appointment.
- e. When a deacon retires, he retains the pagella of faculties granted at ordination or as later amended. These faculties are to be exercised with the consent of the Pastor of the parish where service is to be rendered.
- f. Deacons who exercise faculties by participation in ministry after retirement are required to participate in an annual spiritual retreat, continuing formation programs, and other programs as required by the office of the Diaconate.

2.5 TESTIMONIALS OF SUITABILITY FOR DEACONS

This policy applies only to testimonials concerning Safe Environment. Testimonials concerning theological orthodoxy of qualifications as a presenter in the name of the Church should be handled separately and individually. This applies only to persons coming to minister in the Archdiocese of New Orleans for a single event. Those deacons being assigned to ministry in the Archdiocese of New Orleans work with the procedures of the appropriate office.

2.5.1 TESTIMONIALS ON BEHALF OF PERMANENT DEACONS INCARDINATED INTO THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW ORLEANS

Permanent deacons incardinated into the Archdiocese of New Orleans must request a Testimonial of Suitability from the Office of the Permanent Diaconate if they are to be engaged in public ministry outside of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Upon receiving the request, the Office of the Permanent Diaconate will send the testimonial to the appropriate Ordinary. A testimonial must be requested each time a deacon travels outside of the Archdiocese of New Orleans to engage in public ministry.

2.5.2 TESTIMONIALS ON BEHALF OF TRANSITIONAL DEACONS INCARDINATED INTO THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW ORLEANS

Transitional deacons must request a Testimonial of Suitability for the Priest Personnel Office.

2.5.3 TESTIMONIALS RECEIVED IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW ORLEANS FOR VISITING DEACONS

Any visiting deacon intending to exercise public ministry in the Archdiocese of New Orleans is required to present prior to engaging in any such ministry a Testimonial of Suitability from his ordinary, religious superior, or their duly authorized delegate. All testimonials should be sent to the Office of the Archbishop of New Orleans who will forward all testimonials to the Priest Personnel Office, which will be the repository for all Testimonials of Suitability for Permanent Deacons visiting the Archdiocese of New Orleans. The Priest Personnel Office will acknowledge receipt and inform the appropriate local ministry site of the reception of the testimonial. The Priest Personnel Office will keep a record of all testimonials received. Testimonials are only valid for the particular time of ministry stated in the document.