

## CHAPTER X.

### THE DEACON'S MINISTRY OF LITURGY

#### A. MASS WITH A DEACON

The functions of the deacon during the celebration of the Mass are covered in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal under the title "Mass with a Deacon"

Since the newly approved GIRM is now in place it is essential that each deacon familiarize himself with the provisions specified in paragraphs 171 through 186:

- Introductory Rites
- Liturgy of the Word
- Liturgy of the Eucharist
- Concluding Rite

#### B. WHEN DEACONS PARTICIPATE AS AN ORDER IN MASS

Normally, those deacons who are present for a Mass but are not called upon to function as a sacred minister in the celebration of the Mass, do not vest or occupy a specific place in the liturgy. This will prevent the development of a practice that might easily appear to be an imitation of concelebration.

There are times when the deacons of a diocese gather **as an order**, in which case they **do** vest and are seated together in a specific place. One instance when this is true is at the celebration of the ordination of another deacon or deacons. Other times when it may be appropriate for deacons to function as an order are at the Mass of Christian Burial of a member of the clergy or that of a member of a deacon's immediate family, at Mass celebrated as part of the annual In-Service Training Day, and at various diocesan or regional celebrations, including the yearly Chrism Mass and silver and golden jubilees. Even in these cases, however, the deacons remain in their assigned place during the Liturgy of the Eucharist in order to avoid any confusion of ministries between them and the priests who may be concelebrating the liturgy.

At the liturgies described above the Master of Ceremonies has the responsibility of informing the diaconal order regarding its specific place and functions during this particular liturgy. Normally, the Deacon of the Word and the Deacon of the Eucharist are the only deacons present in the sanctuary during the celebration of the Mass.

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The Archbishop's letter, dated 3/9/1994, indicated that wives of deacons who wished to process/recess with their husbands are welcome to do so, and that they should meet with their deacon husbands as they enter into the church. They should then process down the aisle with them, and sit with them in the pews. However, this should be coordinated with the presider, or the pastor, or the Master of Ceremonies. In those cases when this procedure is not followed, reserved seating should be provided for deacon's wives in a section directly behind the assembly of deacons, or in a section directly adjacent to the deacons. The appropriate posture for the body of deacons and wives during the Eucharistic Prayer is kneeling along with the congregation in the assembly unless the norm for the parish is for the congregation to stand.

### C. WHEN THE DEACON PRESIDES AT A SUNDAY CELEBRATION IN THE ABSENCE OF A PRIEST OR AT A COMMUNION SERVICE

Of greatest importance in the celebration of any liturgy, **other than a Mass at which a priest presides**, during which the laity may receive the Eucharist, is the avoidance insofar as possible of actions and words that might lead the laity into confusion, thinking that the occasion in which they are participating **in** a Mass, when in fact it is a "Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest," or else a Communion Service.

As the primary assistants of priests, deacons are called in a special way to lead Sunday assemblies that are conducted for Christ's faithful in the absence of a priest. Since the deacon has been ordained for the nurture and increase of the people of God, it belongs to him to lead the prayers, to proclaim the Gospel, to preach the homily, and to give Communion.

When a deacon presides at the Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest, he acts in accord with his ministry in regard to the greetings, the prayers, the Gospel reading and homily, the giving of Communion, and the dismissal and blessing. He wears the vestments proper to his ministry, that is, the alb with stole, and, as circumstances suggest, the dalmatic. He uses the presidential chair.

The foregoing guidelines apply equally well to (1) weekday Communion Services conducted by a deacon in the absence of a priest, regardless of the liturgical rank of the day, and (2) Saturday evening Communion Services that anticipate the Sunday liturgy when it is reasonably clear that there can be no Sunday Mass celebrated in that place.

"Because of its special importance, the Sunday Celebration gives way only to solemnities or feasts of the Lord." Hence, the wear of the dalmatic by the deacon presider is appropriate on these occasions. During the week, however, the dalmatic is

not appropriate vesture unless the weekday is a solemnity or a feast of the Lord. Only a careful reading of the *Ordo* can reassure the deacon that he has taken into account all the pertinent liturgical norms.

The liturgical ritual book to be followed is either *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest/Concelebraciones Dominicales el La Ausencia de un Presbitero, (bi-lingual) 1997 edition* (for Sundays), or *Holy Communion Outside Mass*, (for weekdays).

### D. THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS

Permanent deacons in the United States are not obliged to pray the Liturgy of the Hours in its entirety on a daily basis. However, this practice is recommended as a most salutary and effective form of prayer. As a minimum, deacons in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe are to undertake the regular recitation of Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer, whenever the opportunity arises, these Hours should be celebrated in community.

### E. WEAR OF CLERICAL ATTIRE

Canon 288 exempts permanent deacons from the general requirement to wear “suitable ecclesiastical garb,” and there are currently **no** recognized occasions when it is appropriate for deacons in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe to wear the clerical (Roman) collar. A deacon who identifies an occasion that he believes warrants an exception to this policy should state his case in writing to the Director so that it can be evaluated and a decision reached by the Archbishop.

The only approved exception to this general rule is the occasion when a deacon assists at a liturgy of the Byzantine Catholic Church, where he is expected to wear a gray clergy shirt and clerical collar.

A name tag or other device, such as a pendant or a pin in the form of a cross on which is superimposed a deacon’s stole, may be used to identify the permanent deacon exercising his ministry, when he judges such identification to be pastorally helpful.

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