

ORDINATION OF DEACONS

INTRODUCTION

The ordination of deacons should take place on a Sunday or holyday, when a large number of the faithful can attend, unless pastoral reasons suggest another day.

The public commitment to celibacy by the candidate for ordination as priests and by unmarried candidates for the diaconate, including religious, must be made before the rite of ordination of a deacon.

The ordination should take place ordinarily at the *cathedra* or bishop's chair; or, to enable the faithful to participate more fully, a chair for the bishop may be placed before the altar or elsewhere. Seats for those to be ordained should be placed so that the faithful may have a complete view of the liturgical rites.

Those to be ordained wear an alb (with amice and cincture unless other provisions are made).

In addition to what is needed for the celebration of Mass, there should be ready: (a) the Roman Pontifical; (b) stole and dalmatic for the individual candidates.

The chalice should be sufficiently large for the communion of those ordained.

When everything is ready, the procession moves through the church to the altar in the usual way. A deacon carries the Book of the Gospels; he is followed by the candidates and finally by the bishop between two deacons.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Liturgy of the word takes place according to the rubrics.

The readings may be taken in whole or in part from the Mass of the day or from the texts listed below.

Some of the readings are intended for a particular use. The others may be used at any ordination.

According to liturgical tradition, the Old Testament is not read during the Easter season; a preference is given, in the gospel, to the readings from John.

READINGS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. NUMBERS 3:5-10

Gather the tribe of Levi so that they can serve Aaron the priest. [For deacons]

2. NUMBERS 11:11-12, 14-17, 24-25

I will give them your spirit so that they may share with you the burden of this people. [For priests]

3. ISAIAH 61:1-3

The Lord has anointed me and sent me to bring Good News to the poor and to give them the oil of gladness. [For bishops and priests]

4. JEREMIAH 1:4-9

You will go to all the places to which I will send you.

READINGS FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. ACTS 6:1-7

They chose seven men filled with the Holy Spirit. [For deacons]

2. ACTS 8:26-40

Beginning with this text of Scripture he explained the Good News of Jesus to him. [For deacons]

3. ACTS 10:37-43

We are witnesses to everything Jesus did in the countryside around Judea and in Jerusalem.

4. ACTS 20:17-18, 28-32, 36

Keep watch for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to govern the Church of God. [For bishops and priests]

5. ROMANS 12:4-8.

Our gifts differ according to the grace given to each of us.

6. 2 CORINTHIANS 4:1-2, 5-7

We are teaching Jesus Christ, but we are your servants for Jesus' sake.

7. 2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-20

He gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

8. EPHESIANS 4:1-7, 11-13

Unity in the work of service, building up the body of Christ.

9. 1 TIMOTHY 3:8-13

They must be conscientious believers in the mystery of faith. [For deacons]

10. 1 TIMOTHY 4:12-16

Do not neglect the spiritual gift given you when the elders laid hands on you.

11. 2 TIMOTHY 1:6-14

Rekindle the gift that God gave you when I laid my hands on you. [For bishops]

12. HEBREWS 5:1-10

Christ was acclaimed by God a high priest in the line of Melchizedek.

13. 1 PETER 4:7-11

As good stewards be responsible for the different graces of God.

14. 1 PETER 5:1-4

Be shepherds of the flock of God which is entrusted to you.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM**1. PSALM 22:1-6**

R. The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

2. PSALM 83:3-6, 8, 11

R. How happy they who dwell in your house, O Lord.

3. PSALM 88:21-22, 25, 27

R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

4. PSALM 95:1-3, 10

R. Go out to the world and teach all nations, alleluia.

5. PSALM 99:2-5

R. You are my friends if you do what I command you, says the Lord.

6. PSALM 109:1-4

R. Priest for ever, like Melchizedek of old, the Lord Christ offered bread and wine.

or: R. You are a priest for ever, in the line of Melchizedek.

7. PSALM 115:12-13, 17-18

R. Our blessing-cup is a communion with the blood of Christ.

or: R. Alleluia.

8. PSALM 116:1-2

R. Go out to all the world, and tell the Good News.

or: R. Alleluia.

ALLELUIA VERSE AND VERSE BEFORE THE GOSPEL**1. MATTHEW 28:19-20**

Go and teach all people my Gospel.

I am with you always, until the end of the world.

2. LUKE 4:18-19

The Lord sent me to bring Good News to the poor,
and freedom to prisoners.

3. JOHN 10:14

I am the good shepherd, says the Lord;

I know my sheep, and mine know me.

4. JOHN 15:15

I call you my friends, says the Lord,
for I have made known to you all that the Father has told me.

GOSPEL**1. MATTHEW 5:13-16**

You are the light of the world.

2. MATTHEW 9:35-38

Ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to the harvest.

3. MATTHEW 10:1-5

Proclaim that the kingdom of God is at hand.

4. MATTHEW 20:25-28

Anyone among you who wishes to be first must be your servant.

5. LUKE 10:1-9

The harvest is rich but the labourers are few.

6. LUKE 12:35-44

Happy those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes.

7. LUKE 22:14-20, 24-30

Do this in memory of me. I come among you as one who serves.

8. JOHN 10:11-16

The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep.

9. JOHN 12:24-26

Whoever serves me must follow me.

10. JOHN 15:9-17

I shall not call you servants; you are my friends.

11. JOHN 17:6, 14-19

For them I consecrate myself so that they too may be consecrated in truth.

12. JOHN 20:19-23

As the Father has sent me, I send you: receive the Holy Spirit.

13. JOHN 21:15-17

Feed my lambs, feed my sheep.

The profession of faith is not said, nor are the general intercessions.

ORDINATION OF DEACONS

The ordination of a deacon begins after the gospel. The bishop, wearing his miter, sits at his chair.

CALLING OF THE CANDIDATES

The candidate is called by the deacon:

Those to be ordained deacons please come forward.

Then their names are called by the deacon. Each one answers: *Present*, and goes to the bishop, before whom he makes a sign of reverence.

PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES

When all the candidate are in their places before the bishop, the priest designated by the bishop says:

Most Reverend Father, holy mother Church asks you to ordain these men, our brothers, for service as deacons.

The bishop asks:

Do you judge them to be worthy?

He answers:

After inquiry among the people of Christ and upon recommendation of those concerned with their training, I testify that they have been found worthy.

ELECTION BY THE BISHOP AND CONSENT OF THE PEOPLE

Bishop:

We rely on the help of the Lord God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, and we choose these men, our brothers, for the order of deacons.

All present say: Thanks be to God, or give their assent to the choice in some other way, according to local custom.

HOMILY

Then all sit, and the bishop gives the homily. He begins with the text of the readings from Scripture and then speaks to the people and the candidate about the office of deacon and the meaning and importance of celibacy in the Church. He may use these words:

These men, your relatives and friends, are now to be raised to the order of deacons. Consider carefully the ministry to which they are to be promoted.

They will draw new strength from the gift of the Holy Spirit. They will help the bishop and his body of priests as a minister of the word, of the altar, and of charity. They will make themselves servants to all. As ministers of the altar they will proclaim the Gospel, prepare the sacrifice, and give the Lord's body and blood to the community of believers.

It will also be their duty, at the bishop's discretion, to bring God's word to believer and unbeliever alike, to preside over public prayer, to baptise, to assist at marriages and bless them, to give viaticum to the dying, and to lead the rites of burial. Once they are consecrated by the laying on of hands that comes to us from the apostles and are bound more closely to the altar, they will perform works of charity in the name of the bishop or the pastor. From the way they go about these duties, may you recognise them as disciples of Jesus, who came to serve, not to be served.

He then addresses the candidates:

My sons, you are being raised to the order of deacons. The Lord has set an example for you to follow.

As deacons you will serve Jesus Christ, who was known among his disciples as the one who served others. Do the will of God generously. Serve God and mankind in love and joy. Look upon all unchastity and avarice as worship of false gods; for no man can serve two masters.

Like the men the apostles chose for works of charity, you should be men of good reputation, filled with wisdom and the Holy Spirit. Show before God and mankind that you are above every suspicion of blame, a true minister of Christ and of God's mysteries, men firmly rooted in faith. Never turn away from the hope which the Gospel offers; now you must not only listen to God's word but also preach it. Hold the mystery of faith with a clear conscience. Express in action what you proclaim by word of mouth. Then the people of Christ, brought to life by the Spirit, will be an offering God accepts. Finally, on the last day, when you go to meet the Lord, you will hear him say: "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord."

COMMITMENT TO CELIBACY

After the homily the candidates, who are to manifest their intention of a commitment to celibacy, stand before the bishop. The bishop speaks to them in these or similar words:

By your own free choice you seek to enter the order of deacons. You shall exercise this ministry in the celibate state for celibacy is both a sign and a motive of pastoral charity, and a special source of spiritual fruitfulness in the world. By living in this state with total dedication, moved by a sincere love for Christ the Lord, you are consecrated to him in a new and special way. By this consecration you will adhere more easily to Christ with an undivided heart; you will be more freely at the service of God and mankind, and you will be more untrammelled in the ministry of Christian conversion and rebirth. By your life and character you will give witness to your brothers and sisters in faith that God must be loved above all else, and that it is he whom you serve in others.

Therefore, I ask you:

In the presence of God and the Church, are you resolved, as a sign of your interior dedication to Christ, to remain celibate for the sake of the kingdom and in lifelong service to God and mankind?

The candidates answer:

I am.

If it wishes, the conference of bishops may determine some external sign to express the intention of the candidates.

The bishop adds:

May the Lord help you to persevere in this commitment.

The candidates answer:

Amen.

Then the candidates for the diaconate who are not obliged to make the commitment to celibacy come forward.

EXAMINATION OF THE CANDIDATES

The candidates then stands before the bishop who questions all of them together:

My sons, before you are ordained deacons, you must declare before the people your intention to undertake this office.

Are you willing to be ordained for the Church's ministry by the laying on of hands and the gift of the Holy Spirit?

Together all the candidates answer:

I am.

Bishop:

Are you resolved to discharge the office of deacon with humility and love in order to assist the bishop and the priests and to serve the people of Christ?

Candidates:

I am.

Bishop:

Are you resolved to hold the mystery of the faith with a dear conscience as the Apostle urges, and to proclaim this faith in word and action as it is taught by the Gospel and the Church's tradition?

Candidates:

I am.

Bishop:

Are you resolved to maintain and deepen a spirit of prayer appropriate to your way of life and, in keeping with what is required of you, to celebrate faithfully the liturgy of the hours for the Church and for the whole world?

Candidates:

I am.

Bishop:

Are you resolved to shape your way of life always according to the example of Christ, whose body and blood you will give to the people?

Candidates:

I am, with the help of God.

PROMISE OF OBEDIENCE

Then each of the candidates goes to the bishop and, kneeling before him, places his joined hands between those of the bishop. If this gesture seems less suitable in some places, the conference of bishops may choose another gesture or sign.

If the bishop is the candidate's own Ordinary, he asks:

Do you promise respect and obedience to me and my successors?

Candidate:

I do.

If the bishop is not the candidate's own Ordinary, he asks:

Do you promise respect and obedience to your Ordinary?

Candidate:

I do.

Bishop:

May God who has begun the good work in you bring it to fulfilment.

INVITATION TO PRAYER

Then all stand, and the bishop, without his miter, invites the people to pray:

My dear people, let us pray that the all-powerful Father will pour out his blessing on these servants of his, whom he receives into the holy order of deacons.

Deacon (except during the Easter season):

Let us kneel.

LITANY OF THE SAINTS

The candidates prostrates themselves and, except during the Easter season, the rest kneel at their places.

The cantors begin the litany; they may add, at the proper place, names of other saints (for example, the patron saint, the titular of the church, the founder of the church, the patron saint of the one to be ordained) or petitions suitable to the occasion.

Lord, have mercy.	Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy	Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy	Lord, have mercy
Holy Mary, Mother of God	pray for us
Saint Michael	pray for us
Holy Angels of God	pray for us
Saint John the Baptist	pray for us

Saint Joseph pray for us
Saint Peter and St Paul pray for us
Saint Andrew pray for us
Saint John pray for us
Saint Mary Magdalene pray for us
Saint Stephen pray for us
Saint Ignatius pray for us
Saint Lawrence pray for us
Saint Perpetua and Saint Felicity pray for us
Saint Agnes pray for us
Saint Gregory pray for us
Saint Augustine pray for us
Saint Athanasius pray for us
Saint Basil pray for us
Saint Martin pray for us
Saint Benedict pray for us
Saint Francis and Saint Dominic pray for us
Saint Francis Xavier pray for us
Saint John Vianney pray for us
Saint Catherine pray for us
Saint Teresa pray for us
All holy men and women pray for us
Lord, be merciful Lord, save your people
From all evil Lord, save your people
From every sin Lord, save your people
From everlasting death Lord save your people
By your coming as man Lord, save your people
By your death and rising to new life Lord, save your people
By your gift of the Holy Spirit Lord, save your people
Be merciful to us sinners Lord, hear our prayer
Guide and protect your holy Church Lord, hear our prayer
Keep the pope and all the clergy
in faithful service to your Church Lord, hear our prayer
Bring all peoples together
in trust and peace Lord, hear our prayer
Strengthen us in your service Lord, hear our prayer
Bless these chosen men Lord, hear our prayer
Bless these chosen men
and make them holy Lord, hear our prayer
Bless these chosen men, make them holy,
and consecrate them for their sacred duties Lord, hear our prayer
Jesus, Son of the living God Lord, hear our prayer
Christ, hear us Christ, hear us
Lord Jesus, hear our prayer Lord Jesus, hear our prayer

The bishop alone stands and, with his hands joined, sings or says:
Lord God,
hear our petitions

and give your help to this act of our ministry.
We judge these men worthy to serve as deacons
and we ask you to bless them
and make them holy.

Grant this through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Deacon:

Let us stand.

LAYING ON OF HANDS

Then all stand. One by one the candidates go to the bishop and kneel before him. The bishop lays his hands on the head of each, in silence.

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

The candidates kneel before the bishop. With his hands extended over the candidates, he sings the prayer of consecration or says it aloud:

Almighty God,

be present with us by your power.

You are the source of all honour,

you assign to each his rank,

you give to each his ministry.

You remain unchanged,

but you watch over all creation and make it new

through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord:

he is your Word, your power, and your wisdom.

You foresee all things in your eternal providence

and make due provision for every age.

You make the Church, Christ's body,

grow to its full stature as a new and greater temple.

You enrich it with every kind of grace

and perfect it with a diversity of members

to serve the whole body in a wonderful pattern of unity.

You established a threefold ministry of worship and service

for the glory of your name.

As ministers of your tabernacle you chose the sons of Levi

and gave them your blessing as their everlasting inheritance.

In the first days of your Church

under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit

the apostles of your Son appointed seven men of good repute

to assist them in the daily ministry,

so that they themselves might be more free for prayer and preaching.

By prayer and the laying on of the hands

the apostles entrusted to those chosen men the ministry of serving at tables.

Lord

look with favour on these servants of yours,

whom we now dedicate to the office of deacon,

to minister at your holy altar.

Lord,
send forth upon them the Holy Spirit,
that they may be strengthened
by the gift of your sevenfold grace
to carry out faithfully the work of the ministry.

May they excel in every virtue:
in love that is sincere,
in concern for the sick and the poor,
in unassuming authority,
in self-discipline,
and in holiness of life.

May their conduct exemplify your commandments
and lead your people to imitate his purity of life.
May they remain strong and steadfast in Christ,
giving to the world the witness of a pure conscience.
May they in this life imitate your Son,
who came, not to be served but to serve,
and one day reign with him in heaven.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
R. Amen.

INVESTITURE WITH STOLE AND DALMATIC

After the prayer of consecration, the bishop, wearing his miter, sits, and the newly ordained stand. Some of the assisting deacons or priests put a deacon's stole and then a dalmatic on each of them.

Meanwhile, the following antiphon may be sung with Psalm 83.

Blessed are they who dwell in your house, O Lord.

The antiphon is repeated after every two verses. *Glory to the Father* is not said. The psalm is interrupted and the antiphon repeated when the dalmatics have been put on all the deacons.

Any other appropriate song may be sung.

PRESENTATION OF THE BOOK OF THE GOSPELS

Vested as deacons, the newly ordained go to the bishop and kneel before him. He places the Book of the Gospels in the hands of each one and says:

Receive the Gospel of Christ,
whose herald you now are.
Believe what you read,
teach what you believe,
and practice what you teach.

KISS OF PEACE

Lastly, the bishop stands and gives the kiss of peace to each of the new deacons, saying:

Peace be with you.

The deacon responds:

And also with you.

If circumstances permit, the deacons present also give the kiss of peace to the newly ordained.

Meanwhile, the following antiphon may be sung with Psalm 145.

If anyone serves me, says the Lord,
my Father in heaven will honour him.

The antiphon is repeated after every two verses. *Glory to the Father* is not said. The psalm is interrupted and the antiphon repeated when all have received the kiss of peace.

Any other appropriate song may be sung.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

The Order of Mass is followed with these changes:

a) Some of the new deacon brings the offerings for the celebration to the bishop; one of them assists him at the altar.

b) In Eucharistic Prayer I, the special form of *Father, accept this offering* is said:

Father, accept this offering from your whole family
and from those you have chosen for the order of deacons.

Protect the gifts you have given them,
and let them yield a harvest worthy of you.

[Through Christ our Lord. Amen.]

The new deacons receive communion under both kinds. The deacon who assists the bishop ministers the cup.

Some of the new deacons assist the bishop in giving communion to the people.