

COUNCIL OF DEACONS CONSTITUTION

INTRODUCTION: The restored Order of Deacons in the Diocese of Lafayette joins in ministry with the Bishop and his Presbyterate through a *diakonia* of liturgy, word and charity. As living icons of Christ the Servant, deacons are united to one another in a sacramental fraternity and are called to maintain their communion of service. To foster this diaconal communion, The Council of Deacons has been established as a strictly advisory board to serve as a means of communication between the deacons themselves. The Council of Deacons is created by the Bishop to reinforce the diaconal community and shall be in accord with the Policies of the Diocese of Lafayette and Canon Law. The Council of Deacons will serve as an instrument of communion within the diaconal community of the Diocese of Lafayette for all spiritual, educational and administrative matters held to be important by the diaconal community. So too, this Council of Deacons will serve those in formation, who hope to join in a *diakonia* of love.

Part I: MEMBERSHIP

1. GENERAL

The name of this group is The Council of Deacons of the Diocese of Lafayette, and serves at the discretion of the Bishop. The Council shall be accountable to the Bishop, his appointed representative and to the deacons it represents. When the office of Bishop is vacant, this Council shall cease until another Bishop is installed and has given his approval for the Council's existence.

There are three (3) categories of Council membership:

- a. Five (5) members are elected from those eligible for membership; of these, one (1) member is elected from each of the four deaneries, and one (1) member is elected at-large.
- b. One (1) member shall be appointed by the Bishop in consultation with the Director of Permanent Diaconate to ensure as broad representation as possible, including representation from deacons serving in parishes pastored by religious priests, large/small parishes, African-American parishes, other minority groups and the deaneries of the diocese.
- c. The Bishop, Vicar General, Vicar for Clergy, Director of Permanent Diaconate and Assistant Directors of Permanent Diaconate Formation are member's ex-officio.

2. ELIGIBILITY FOR MEMBERSHIP AND VOTING

All deacons incardinated in and in good standing with the Diocese, and who have domicile in the Diocese of Lafayette, are eligible for membership and to vote in elections.

3. TERM

(Initially the one at-large member and two of the four deanery members will be elected for a one year term. The two deanery members with one year terms will be selected by a drawing. The same procedure shall follow upon establishment by a new Bishop unless otherwise changed by the new Bishop.)

The term of office of elected and appointed Council member is two (2) years.

Part II: ELECTIONS

1. PROCESS

1. Elections take place by mail ballot sent by the recording secretary.
2. Elections will be completed in time for the June Council meeting.
3. Nominations for positions vacant in the deaneries shall be made by the membership of that group.
4. Nominations for an at-large membership shall be made by the entire body of deacons eligible to vote.
5. All deacons eligible to vote will receive a ballot to elect from nominated candidates.
6. In the event of a tie, the Permanent Diaconate Director will draw lots for the new member.

2. TERMINATION

In the case of two (2) consecutive unexcused absences on the part of any elected or appointed Council member, membership on the Council ceases. Before informing the member of his termination, the Chair will consult the Permanent Diaconate Director.

3. UNCOMPLETED TERM

Any elected or appointed member who cannot complete his term is replaced for the unexpired portion of his term at the next regular meeting. The Chair of the Council appoints previously elected member's replacement after consultation with the Executive Committee. The Permanent Diaconate Director will appoint the new member who replaces a previously appointed member.

Part III: MEMBERS

1. PRESIDER

The Bishop presides over the Council in person, or if he so desires, through a delegate.

2. OFFICERS

1. The Council has its own officers chosen from among its membership, elected at the June meeting. These are: Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. The officers order and conduct the business of the Council under usual circumstances.
2. Deliberations of the Council of Deacons shall have no effect without the participation of the Bishop or his delegate and the Director of the Diaconate.
3. The Chair of the Council:
 - a. Is elected by the members of the Council for a term of two (2) years.
 - b. Chairs meetings of the Council and the Executive Committee of the Council.
 - c. Assist the Permanent Diaconate Director and Executive Committee in preparing the agenda for the meetings of the Council.
 - d. The Diaconate Director has final approval for agenda
4. The Vice-Chair of the Council:
 - a. Is elected by the members of the Council for a term of two (2) years.
 - a. **(Initially he will be elected for a one year term.)**
 - b. Assumes the duties of the Chair upon his absence or at his request.
 - c. Assists the Chair as directed by him.
 - d. Assists the Chair in preparing meeting agendas.
5. The Secretary of the Council:
 1. Is elected by the members of the Council for a term of two (2) years.
 2. Oversees the nomination and election of members of the Council.
 3. Shall provide for the notification of all meetings to the members of the Council.
 4. Assists the Permanent Diaconate Director and Chair in preparing meeting agendas.

PART IV: MEETINGS

1. GENERAL

1. The Council shall meet no less than three (3) times per year.
2. The Permanent Diaconate Director or the Chair, with the Permanent Diaconate Director's consent, may call for special meetings of the Council at any time.
3. All deacons eligible to vote may attend Council meetings, except during an Executive Session.

2. COMMITTEES

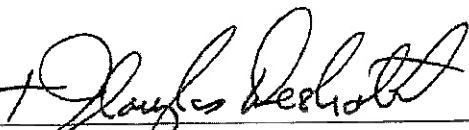
1. The Executive Committee: the officers of the Council, with the Bishop, constitute the Executive Committee, which shall have general supervision of the Council affairs at those times when the Council is unable to meet.
2. Standing and ad hoc committees of the Council may be established as needed.

PART V: CONSTITUTION

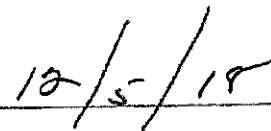
1. AMENDMENTS AND BY-LAWS

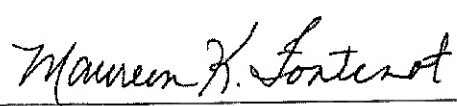
1. Amendments to this constitution shall be proposed to the Bishop by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Council.
2. By-laws not in conflict with this constitution may be adopted by the affirmative vote of the majority of the Council.
3. All amendments and by-laws must have the approval of the Bishop and take effect at the moment of his written approval.
4. The recording secretary shall keep copies of this constitution, all pertinent by-laws and meeting minutes.

Approved


Most Reverend J. Douglas Deshotel

Date




Mrs. Maureen K. Fontenot, PHR, SHRM-CP
Chancellor

