

## **TRANSITIONAL DEACONS**

### **Ordination<sup>1</sup>**

Ordinations to the diaconate will ordinarily take place in the seminary. If for some reason, the diaconate ordination is celebrated in the Cathedral or in one's home parish, it is to be kept simple so as not to overshadow the priesthood ordination.

### **Supervision<sup>2</sup>**

The bishop prefers that a deacon have some experience functioning as a deacon in the Diocese. This assists the man in becoming familiar in an ordained ministerial role. It gives him real and practical experiences. Reflection on this level promotes a firm foundation for his priestly identity. As supervisor, the pastor of the parish to which the deacon is assigned will work primarily with the Director of Vocations.

If the deacon is still in a seminary formation program the pastor of the parish to which he is assigned will work primarily with the seminary in supervision, with contact with the Director of Vocations. If the deacon has completed his formal studies in the seminary, the pastor will work with the Director of Vocations for supervision. Guidelines for this mentoring process are found in the next section.

### **Salary and Benefits<sup>3</sup>**

The one ordained to the diaconate for the Diocese is automatically incardinated into the Diocese. When assigned in ministry as a deacon, the deacon receives the same benefits as the parochial vicar. If the deacon is at seminary for further studies, he receives the same amount that diocesan theology students receive each month, which comes from the Vocations Department budget. While assigned to the parish, the parish is responsible for other benefits that are due to all parochial vicars.

The only exception to this is the assessments for the Priests Retirement Fund and for the life insurance policy. The deacon on being ordained to the priesthood is automatically enrolled, at that time, into these two programs.

### **Guidelines for Mentoring Process for a Transitional Deacon**

The transition from seminarian to deacon and, subsequently, to priesthood is a critical time in the life of those approaching priestly ordination. This is a time of challenges and great opportunities for continued growth in pastoral, administrative, and leadership skills. The bishop expects every seminarian that receives an appointment as a transitional deacon to enter into a mentoring process with his pastor.

The following are some suggestions of what this mentoring process should include:

- The role of the pastor is to be a supervisor. He is not to act as a spiritual director. The role of the pastor is to stay within the area of external forum.
- Within the first ten days of the deacon's assignment it is suggested that the pastor set some quality time to begin to discuss rectory living and pastoral ministry and duties. Then on, it is important to set aside a regular time without interruptions to reflect upon pastoral ministry. Don't leave it to chance; it won't happen. Don't use

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<sup>1</sup> Issued 1998

<sup>2</sup> Issued 2001

<sup>3</sup> Issued 2001

this time to handle other business.

- There should be a minimum of three or four meetings during the course of the assignment, but the new deacon should feel free to request a meeting whenever he feels the need to do so.
- The new deacon is responsible for mutually setting the agenda with his pastor in order to choose the areas of ministry and administration on which to be consulted concerning the specific events, incidents, decisions, and issues to be discussed.
- The pastor's responsibility is to do a lot of listening and to ask questions before responding or offering suggestions. He should not be afraid to ask the challenging questions. In offering suggestions, the pastor should share his own experiences, his own stories of both successes and failures.
- The primary focus and goal will be on continued growth in pastoral and administrative skills and issues and future priestly identity.
- The new deacon should feel free to consult with the pastor on every aspect of pastoral ministry. He is to be open to acquiring knowledge in every area that touches upon parish life and ministry, including, but not limited to, the following areas.

#### ***Administrative/Leadership Responsibilities***

- Finance management
- Community building
- Conflict management
- Developing and training leaders
- Plant management
- Facilitating meetings
- Time management
- Collaborative ministry

#### ***Sacramental Responsibilities***

- Presiding - Mass and administering the Sacraments
- Preaching - homily preparation and delivery
- Funerals

#### ***Pastoral Responsibilities***

- Pastoral counseling
- Spiritual direction
- Ministry to the sick
- Bereavement ministry
- Processing marriage cases
- Detention ministry
- Developing small faith sharing communities/evangelization
- Dealing with problem parishioners
- Multi-cultural ministries
- Ecumenical ministry
- Community involvement

***Growth and Development***

- Continued education/workshops - keeping current on church and pastoral issues
- Continued spiritual formation/prayer/days of reflection/retreats, etc.
- Personal time - rest, health, exercise, nutrition
- Stress management

At the end of each year, the pastor is to present to the bishop a written evaluation concerning his involvement with the given transitional deacon in the mentoring program.