

# **DIOCESE OF WORCESTER**

## **PERSONNEL POLICIES FOR DEACONS**

**REVISED  
DECEMBER 2015**

*+ Robert J. McManus*

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*December 16, 2015*

**Date**

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# DIOCESE OF WORCESTER

## PERSONNEL POLICIES FOR DEACONS

### PREAMBLE

*The Lord Jesus said:*

“But if I washed your feet,  
I who am teacher and Lord,  
Then you must wash each other’s feet.

*What I just did was to give you an example:*

*As I have done, so you must do!”*

*John 13: 14-15*

The concept of mission has its source in God. The Son was sent by the Father, and the Holy Spirit was “sent” by the Father and the Son. The Church, too, is missionary by its very nature. “As the Father sent me, so I send you.” (John 20:21)

The Church’s ministry of word, sacrament, witness, and service is Christ’s ministry. Ordained ministry, therefore, means primarily, to exercise a mission in the name of Jesus Christ, Lord and Teacher.

Through the imposition of hands by the Bishop, the deacon shares sacramentally in the diaconal ministry of Christ. A collaborative bond is thereby established between the deacon and the Bishop and his priests to carry on the mission of Christ among His people.

# **SECTION ONE**

## **ADMINISTRATION**

### **I. THE DIRECTORS AND ASSISTANTS**

The Director of the Diaconate, as representative of the Bishop, is directly responsible for the entire Diaconate program. Assistant Directors for Formation, appointed by the Bishop, and a Coordinator for Diaconal Family Activities and an Assistant Director of Ethnic Diversities will assist the Director. In addition, because the program involves a large sphere of operations, the following committees have been established to assist the Directors in all areas of diaconal concern.

### **II. THE DIACONATE ADVISORY BOARD**

This Diaconate Board is a consultative committee made up of men and women who are supportive of the diaconal ministry in the Diocese of Worcester. This board assists the Directors in determining policies concerning recruitment, selection, and formation of diaconal candidates as well as in considering policies relative to continued spiritual and academic development of those ordained to the Diaconate.

The Director and the Assistant Directors are ex-officio members. Other members may include priests (some of whom are pastors), deacons and their wives, men and women religious, and lay people.

### **III. THE DIACONATE SELECTION COMMITTEE**

The purpose of this committee is to assist the Directors in interviewing those who have inquired about the Diaconate program. The committee's participation in the actual selection of candidates for the program is absolutely essential, most especially in the areas of screening and recommending or not recommending acceptance of applicants. Because of the sensitivity of these issues, a serious allegiance to confidentiality underlies all discussions.

The Selection Committee will develop criteria for screening applicants and their wives, if married, to discern which inquirers may have a call to the Diaconate. From the Committee, teams of two or three members will conduct two interviews: one with the inquirer and his wife; the other with the inquirer and members of his household.

Before the actual selection of candidates, the Directors will review the reports and recommendations of the two selection committee interviews. If there is a concern, there will be a further review with the interview teams. The final decision is based on the Directors' screening interview, the selection committee's recommendations, and the staff's evaluation.

## **SECTION TWO**

### **APPLICANTS/ASPIRANTS/CANDIDATES**

#### **I. ADMISSIONS AND SCREENING PROCESS**

##### **A. Admissions Criteria**

As one who shares the Sacrament of Holy Orders with bishops and priests, the deacon is called to serve and to lead through service, liturgy, and the Word. Because the deacon carries out very important spiritual and ecclesial responsibilities among the People of God, he must be able to meet the demands of preparation for ordination and a life of service as an authentic servant of the Church in the name of Jesus, the Lord. Therefore, a process of screening possible candidates has been designed.

##### **1. Basic Criteria**

###### **The candidate must**

be a baptized and confirmed male, a practicing member of the Latin Catholic Church who is at least 31 years of age and not older than 60 at the time of application. He may be single or married. If married, he must give evidence that the marriage is stable; the candidate's wife and family must fully support the candidate in his decision to prepare for and to serve as a deacon.

###### **Each candidate must**

- a. be in sound physical and mental health.
- b. have attended four years of college and received a bachelor's degree or its equivalent.
- c. have been a practicing Catholic for at least the five years previously.
- d. have been active in his parish for at least five years.
- e. have a mature vocational call and a well-integrated spirituality.
- f. enjoy a well-adjusted family and be able to dedicate the required time for academic and spiritual preparation and for ministry in the parish after ordination.
- g. have sufficient reading and writing skills to undertake the academic and spiritual formation program.
- h. at some point, present a letter from his personal physician who attests to the candidate's good health.



- i. present certificates of Baptism, Confirmation and Marriage (if applicable).
- j. be a United States Citizen.

*Waivers may be granted, in certain instances, depending on the circumstances of an individual applicant.*

## **2. The Process In General**

- Inquiry through the Office of the Diaconate.
- Initial interview with one of the Directors, the inquirer and, if married, his wife.
- Two other interviews with teams from the Selection Committee.

### **B. The Screening Process**

Inquirers may learn of the diaconal program by attending “Information Nights or by contacting the Office of the Diaconate.

If he is still interested, both he and, if married, his wife, should then expect to arrange for the first of three interviews in a screening process designed to determine whether or not an applicant is eligible and ready to enter into the discernment process.

The first interview is conducted with the Director and the inquirer and his wife. It is a general interview which assures the Director that

1. the criteria listed have been met;
2. the inquirer’s wife and family completely approve;
3. the inquirer has a sound understanding of the demands of the program.

A decision will then be made whether or not to advance the inquirer and his wife to a second interview with a team made up of members from the Selection Committee. The interviewing Director may ask for a second initial interview to be carried out by an Assistant Director.

The **second** interview is called the Thematic Interview and is directed by a team of members of the Selection Committee. This interview seeks to look further into the areas of family, faith, one’s “personal story,” and once again, the reasons for pursuing diaconal ministry.

The **third** interview takes place in the home. A different team of interviewers will direct this meeting which focuses mainly on the stability of the family and their responses to the expectations of diaconal formation and ordained ministry.

At a staff meeting, the information from the three interviews is reviewed in strictest confidence to determine who should or who should not be admitted into the discernment process. The final decision is based on the Director’s screening interview, the selection committees’ recommendations, and the staff’s evaluation. There may also be a decision to postpone admission to another time.

### **C. The Discernment Process**

Upon receiving a letter of admission from the Director, the inquirer and his wife are then expected to complete the process of discernment.

- The twelve-week discernment process usually begins in September and continues through November. Although it is not an academic pursuit, inquirers and, if married, their wives meet in an academic setting. The inquirers have an opportunity to examine both spiritual and temporal aspects of the Diaconate. By the end of the discernment process, the inquirers will have been given the tools to make a sound decision whether or not they want to pursue the academic and spiritual formation of the Diaconate program.
- Sessions take place on Monday and Wednesday from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- The Monday meetings explore the spiritual dimensions of authenticating one's call from the Lord. Coupled with Mass or prayer times, these meetings offer inquirers the spiritual means to probe their holy invitation to serve God's people as a deacon. The spiritual discernment process draws from examples of discernment from Sacred Scripture, the Church Fathers, the Second Vatican Council, and St. Ignatius of Loyola. This part of the process looks at personal prayer lives through Liturgical Prayer and through the Liturgy of the Hours. In all, it seeks to offer the inquirer a time to develop a "discerning heart."
- The Wednesday gatherings center on the "temporal" aspects of preparing for Diaconate and living out the life of a deacon. These sessions include
  - Panel discussion by active deacons on the topic: "The deacon's relationship to family, work, and Church";
  - Panel discussion presented by deacons' wives on the topic: "Learning to grow and cope with a different lifestyle;"
  - An explanation of special ministries for deacons;
  - Presentations on the liturgical role of the deacon;
  - The deacon as a leader;
  - The diaconal policies of the diocese.
  - Please note – The days for spiritual and Temporal sessions may change due to availability of instructors.

Please note that psychological testing is done at a time conducive to the psychologist and discerner. The testing includes aptitude for academic work.

- After the discernment period, the Director and his staff will decide whether or not aspirants are prepared to begin the process of instruction and formation, which includes deeper discernment. Simultaneously, inquirers will decide whether or not they wish to continue in the program, that is, formally enter into spiritual and academic formation.
- If the decision of the Director is affirmative, the inquirer will receive a letter of acceptance to continue discernment/Aspirancy which runs from January to June, two



days per week, usually held on Monday and Wednesday's, but are subject to change due to availability of instructors. One of the courses will cover various aspects of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The other course will cover Religions of the world and family life issues.

- If the decision is not affirmative, the inquirer will receive a letter either postponing his admission to another time or terminating the process altogether.

Lastly, it should be noted that a candidate's personal discernment becomes part of his spiritual consciousness. He should always probe the mystery of the call from the Lord Jesus, validating its authenticity throughout every part of his journey toward ordination.

If no changes occur with regard to acceptance into the Academic/Pastoral/Spiritual phase, all will be notified of acceptance to continue in the fall of that calendar year.

## **II. THE SPIRITUAL/ACADEMIC/PASTORAL FORMATON OF ASPIRANTS**

### **A. Spiritual Formation**

#### **1. Preamble**

Jesus Christ, "the exact representation of the Father's being (who) sustains all things by his powerful word" (Hebrews 1:3), is the certain and abiding Presence who creates and nourishes community among men and women of the Church. In the dispensation of truth and light in Christ, we know that we must continually pray to God in gratitude, live with one another in gentle peace, and build the community of the Church by loving and serving one another as Jesus taught us. It is Jesus who calls us to discipleship in all the dimensions of Church life.

Overall, then, encountering Jesus through prayer, a candidate should develop a personal spirituality and should learn the importance of nurturing that prayer life while ministering among the People of God. Finally, a candidate should be able to translate his personal prayer life and faith into an active ministry of caring for others, of encountering Jesus in others.

#### **2. Goals**

In the light of these truths, the Spiritual Formation Process of the Diaconate Program seeks through the celebration of Holy Eucharist and liturgies outside the Eucharist:

1. to develop and encourage an aspirant's/candidate's prayer life, his personal relationship with God.
2. to reinforce the understanding that a vibrant prayer life becomes a well-spring of spiritual renewal from which the aspirant/candidate may draw strength and peace in ministry.
3. to form a spirit of community among aspirants/candidates and, if married, their wives and all those associated with their spiritual and academic formation.

4. to inform and deepen an aspirant's/candidate's understanding of diaconia to the People of God and to probe the identity of being a deacon ecclesially, spiritually, and socially.
5. to support his relationship with a spiritual director.

### **3. Practicalities of Spiritual Formation**

Aspirants/Candidates and their wives come from a variety of circumstances, live in all regions of the diocese, fulfill many different responsibilities in their families and their jobs. A fruitful spiritual formation process must necessarily accommodate itself to this diversity of experiences.

Therefore, aspirants/candidates and, if married, their wives will gather for prayer and reflection during the following times outside the classroom:

1. Holy Eucharist may be celebrated between 6:30 – 7:00 p.m., the time just before classes begin. However, worship in forms of prayer outside the Eucharist may also be offered, such as Communion Services, celebrated by deacons of the diocese. This spiritual formation may also include Evening Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours, Benediction, recitation of the Rosary, readings of Sacred Scripture with reflection by one of the directors, a guest priest, or a deacon, or other devotions.
2. Days, afternoons, or evenings of reflection, which wives are required to attend with their husbands.
3. A yearly retreat which wives are required to attend.
4. Regular meetings with qualified spiritual directors.

### **B. Academic Formation**

#### **1. The Academic Program: General Structure**

*“An increasingly educated society and the roles of leadership in diaconal ministry require that a deacon be a knowledgeable and reliable witness to the faith and a spokesman for the church's teaching.”* – National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States. The academic formation is composed of a four-year program based on yearly trimesters: January to March; April to June; September to November. Classes are normally conducted from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays at sites to be determined by the director. Days may change due to availability of instructors. Deacon candidates are expected to attend each class and to fulfill the requirements as set out in the syllabus written by the instructor and filed with the Office of the Diaconate.

On line classes are conducted by instructors from St. Joseph College, Maine. The classes may be taken at the candidate's leisure but assignments must be completed in the time noted by the instructor. Mentors are assigned to each candidate and will follow them through completion of all academic degrees and certifications. Candidates will be given all necessary information for proper application and fees. Course grading is in accordance with St. Joseph College requirements. Waivers are given to release information to the Office of the Diaconate for

purpose of proper evaluation. Candidates will meet with Diaconate staff after completion of each assignment time period.

All wives of married candidates are invited and strongly urged to attend the courses along with their husbands; they are not required to do so. Also, wives may take a course for credit (C.E.U.) simply by registering with the Office of the Diaconate. The purchase of books and supplies is the responsibility of the candidates' wives.

## **2. The Academic Program Courses**

The following is a list of the specific courses that comprise the complete academic program:

*Hebrew Scriptures*  
*New Testament Scriptures*  
*Communication Skills/Leadership Training*  
*Social Justice*  
*Christology*  
*The Development of Spirituality*  
*Church History*  
*Ecclesiology*  
*Mariology and The Communion of Saints*  
*Dogmatic Theology*  
*Homiletics I & II& III*  
*Moral Theology*  
*Psychology and Pastoral Counseling*  
*Leadership Training*  
*Sacramental Theology*  
*Introduction to Canon Law*  
*Ecumenism*  
*Evangelization*  
*Family Life Ministries*  
*Sacramental Preparation/ RCIA*  
*Presiding at Liturgical Prayer (Practicum)*

## **3. The Inter-sessions**

Inter-sessions are four-week periods following the third trimester of the first three years of formation. During these sessions, mini-courses are offered to those in training. The courses may but do not necessarily include the following:

*The Theology and Dramatic Elements of Proclamation*  
*Introduction to Liturgical Terminology, Actions and Presence*  
*Understanding Ethnic Diversity in the Diocese of Worcester*  
*Leadership Training*  
*Seminar/Field Experience*  
*Pastoral Internships*

## **4 Grading System**

Those in the Diaconate Formation Program must receive a passing grade in every subject. Candidates who receive a grade below “C-” in more than one subject will be placed on academic probation. Additional marks of “C-” or below will initiate cause for withdrawal from the program.

A grade of “*incomplete*” will be given for a period of three weeks at the close of a trimester to candidates who, for any reason, have failed to complete the course requirements. “Incompletes,” which remain so, will be automatically changed to a grade of “F” at the end of the three-week period unless there are special circumstances that warrant a different action.

The grading system consists of twelve categories as follows:

**A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, F**

“A” is excellent; “B” is good; “C” is satisfactory; “D” is passing but unsatisfactory; “F” is failure.

Exemption examinations, practicums, and some courses are graded on a “pass-fail” basis. The following equivalents for the twelve letter-grades are used.

<b>A = 94-100</b>	<b>C = 74-76</b>	<b>W = Withdraw</b>
<b>A- = 90-93</b>	<b>C- = 70-73</b>	<b>WP = Withdraw Passing</b>
<b>B+ = 87-89</b>	<b>D+ = 67-69</b>	<b>WF = Withdraw Failure</b>
<b>B = 84-86</b>	<b>D = 64-66</b>	
<b>B- = 80-83</b>	<b>D- = 60-63</b>	<b>P = Passing</b>
<b>C+ = 77-79</b>	<b>F = below 60</b>	<b>I = Incomplete</b>

Candidates will be tested and evaluated on their grasp of the material that is presented in class. Besides academic performance, instructors also evaluate candidates on class participation and their interaction with others in the class.

### **C. The Rites of Institution**

The path leading to diaconal formation includes aspirant, candidacy, reader, and acolyte. Each step has the human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral dimensions integrated into the formation process. As the candidate enters each stage of formation, a deeper understanding and commitment to each dimension is stressed.

- **Human dimension**: to develop a high degree of self-knowledge and self-esteem.
- **Spiritual dimension**: to create an environment in which the individual is encouraged to grow in his personal relationship with Christ and in his commitment to the Church and its mission to the world.
- **Intellectual dimension**: to communicate a deeper knowledge of the faith and church tradition, Catholic spirituality, doctrinal understanding of the diaconate, theological reflection and to apply the church’s social justice teaching and practice.

- **Pastoral dimension:** to develop the person's gifts for the threefold ministry of word, liturgy and charity and his capacity to make a lifelong commitment to these ministries.

### **1. The Rite of Admission to Candidacy**

After one full year as an aspirant, the candidate is admitted to the Rite of Candidacy. This is the first official recognition of the positive signs of the vocation to the Diaconate that must be confirmed in the subsequent years of formation.

### **2. The Rite of Institution into the Ministry of Reader**

During the second year of candidacy, several sessions are scheduled for training in Proclaiming the Word. Candidates petition for the conferral of the Rite of Reader when they have successfully completed these training sessions.

### **3. The Rite of Institution into the Ministry of Acolyte**

The candidate has been prepared, through special workshops and participation in weekly ministerial activities, to assume his duties to attend to the service of the altar and to assist the deacon and the priest in liturgical celebrations. During his final year of formation, the candidate will petition the bishop for conferral of the Rite of Acolyte. After his installation into this ministry, the candidate will be assigned to a six-month internship in a local parish under the supervision of a pastor. This is the final step prior to the canonical retreat and Ordination to the Diaconate.

### **4. The Canonical Retreat**

This is a directed retreat made only by candidates (without wives) prior to ordination. All candidates make the same retreat at the same time and at the same retreat house. As a requirement of the Church's law, the five-day canonical retreat helps to prepare the candidate spiritually for the final stages of proceeding to ordination.

### **5. The Ordination to Diaconate**

The recommendation of a candidate to the Bishop for ordination is made by the Director and is based upon the successful completion of the academic and spiritual formation, the canonical retreat, consultation with faculty members and internship pastors, and a final interview with each candidate.

When a candidate is recommended, he is then called by the Bishop to the Order of Deacon. The candidate declares that he is "ready and willing" to become a visible sign of Jesus Christ as a Deacon and asks for ordination. It is then that the Bishop ordains the candidate so that he shares this clerical state with priests and bishops and functions fully in those ministries appropriate to this office.

## **SECTION THREE**

### **DEACONS**

#### **I. THE ASSIGNMENT OF DEACONS**

Having promised obedience in the Rite of Ordination, deacons are assigned to ministry by the Diocesan Bishop (“Bishop” herein). Therefore, the following directive will relate to the assignment of deacons:

1. The determination of assignments is generally guided by
  - the needs of the particular (diocesan) church
  - the capacities of the individual deacons
2. In preparation for and in recommending a diaconal assignment to the Bishop, there will first occur a consultation between the deacon (in appropriate instances, to include candidates to the Diaconate before ordination) and the Directors of the Diaconate Program. This discussion will appraise the deacon’s gifts, interests, and skills and will assess realistically his capacities, prior obligations, and time and travel from his place of residence.
3. Normally but not necessarily, a deacon will be assigned to basic parochial ministry. However, assignments, which involve other specific, non-parochial ministries, may be developed and considered.
4. Once the Bishop has approved the recommended assignment, a ministerial agreement is entered into between the deacon and the pastor/department head/chaplain (‘supervisor’ herein) in order to enunciate and clarify the deacon’s responsibilities in the parish or diocesan agency or institution.

**See Appendix “A”: Ministerial Agreement Form** (Refer to diocesan website for form)

The fundamental goal of the ministerial agreement is to sustain a harmonious working relationship between the supervisor and the deacon. The agreement also helps

- a. to eliminate unrealistic expectations,
- b. to establish realistic objectives,
- c. to preserve proper communication among the supervisor, the deacon and, if married, his wife, the Director and the Bishop.

In all cases, the deacon and, if married, his wife, must meet formally with the supervisor every three years in order to review the agreement and, if necessary, to set new ministry goals



for the coming year. If applicable, the inclusion of the deacon's wife in such a meeting is most desirable in order to protect the stability of the deacon's family life.

In all cases, a ministerial agreement will be ultimately approved by the Bishop and the Director who sign the document along with the supervisor, the deacon and, if married, the deacon's wife.

It is normally expected that the ministerial agreement will include the following directives:

1. The average weekly time spent in ministry should be 12 to 15 hours
2. It is strongly suggested that the pastor allow the deacon to preach at least twice a month at Lord's Day Masses, and as often as possible at other liturgical celebrations, prayers services, etc. Preaching schedules should be rotated on a regular basis so that the deacon would not be preaching at the same Mass each time he preaches.
3. The deacon will be reimbursed monthly for out-of-pocket expenses by the parish/department/chaplaincy. Also monthly, the deacon must submit to his supervisor a list of and/or receipts for these expenses. The maximum amount is determined by the Office of the Diaconate upon the approval of the Bishop.
4. The agreement will specify the expectations of the community directly served by the deacon. Further, the agreement will clearly indicate the lines of supervision and accountability.
5. During the first year of assignment, the supervisor will submit a written and signed evaluation of the ministerial performance of the deacon. Copies of all written evaluations will be filed at the Office of the Diaconate. The supervisor will also give a copy of the evaluation to the deacon.
6. It is expected that the deacon and the pastor/supervisor will meet at least once a year for a formal written evaluation. A periodic evaluation of ministerial assignments may be made at the request of the Office of the Diaconate.
7. When a new pastor, administrator, department head, or chaplain is named to a place where a deacon is already assigned, it is expected that the current ministry agreement will remain unaltered for the first three months of the new pastor's or supervisor's tenure.
8. After the three-month period, if necessary, a new ministry agreement may be drawn up. The new agreement must be submitted to the Director for review. If it is acceptable, the Director will, in turn, present it to the Bishop for his approval and signature. Once again, the deacon, the Director, the wife of the deacon, and the new pastor/supervisor will sign the document.
9. A deacon is assigned for a minimum of three years. In ordinary circumstances and, at the end of three years, renewal of assignment or transfer from that assignment will be determined after a formal consultation with the deacon, the supervisor and the Director.

10. Some deacons may seek an assignment within the area of public service. While the Code of Canon Law permits a deacon to hold political office, a deacon must consult with the Bishop before seeking or accepting such an office. In particular cases, the Bishop may forbid such an undertaking.
11. A deacon is “inactive” if he is not assigned to a parish or ministry within the diocese. If a reassignment cannot be arranged and mutually agreed upon within a period of one year, then the deacon will be placed on an “administrative leave of absence.”

## **II. THE TRANSFER OF DEACONS**

From time to time, it may be advisable and/or necessary to transfer a deacon from his assignment to another parish or a diocesan agency. Transfers may be initiated by one of the following:

1. a directive of the Bishop
2. a request for a transfer from the deacon
3. a request for a transfer from the supervisor
4. the discernment of the Director

It is necessary and important to note that all diaconal appointments are officially made and effected only by the Bishop. No deacon or supervisor may bring about the transfer of a deacon from one assignment to another. The right of appointment of clerics belongs to the Bishop.

### **A. Directive of the Bishop**

The Bishop may request a deacon to consider a transfer to a new assignment because of an immediate diocesan need that must be addressed. To meet the challenge, deacons, as individuals and as members of a servant community, must possess a strong ecclesial sense of mission, an ever-widening vision of ministry. Assignments will always attempt to respect the deacon’s place of residence, family responsibilities, and individual circumstances. The Body of Christ, the Church, will be well served when a deacon willingly, enthusiastically and competently accepts from his Bishop an assignment that meets the particular needs of the People of God.

The Bishop may decide to make known a certain need and may request that a deacon come forward to consider a certain ministerial assignment. In this case, it is important that there ensue collaboration among the Bishop, the deacon, the Directors, and the supervisor of the deacon’s current assignment. However, the final decision will be made by the Bishop for the good of the People of God.

## **B. Request for a Transfer from the Deacon Himself**

A deacon himself will occasionally seek a transfer from a given assignment. The deacon must keep in mind that he has been ordained to serve the needs of the local church and not necessarily those of his home parish or of a parish of his own specific preference.

Therefore, the deacon will essentially review those requests for diaconal services that have been addressed to the Director of the Diaconate. The Director will consult with the deacon until a mutually agreeable assignment is identified.

In the case of a request for a transfer which comes from the deacon himself, the following procedure will be observed

1. The deacon will contact the Director in order to discuss the feasibility of a transfer and to initiate the process for such a transfer.
2. The deacon will make known to his supervisor his desire to be reassigned.
3. The deacon will then notify **in writing** the Director of his desire to seek a new assignment.
4. Before proceeding any further, the Director will notify the Bishop of the deacon's initial request. The Bishop will consider the request in terms of the needs of the diocese, the reason(s) for the request for transfer, and the recommendations of the Director.
5. If the Bishop approves the request of the deacon and the recommendations of the Director, then the director will meet with the deacon to ascertain the specifics of a new assignment. The deacon will then meet with a pastor, department head, or chaplain who may be interested in diaconal services. The Diaconate office may arrange these meetings.
6. When the new assignment has been agreed upon and a ministerial agreement has been drawn up and mutually signed, the deacon will notify the Director by sending them a copy of the agreement. The Director will review the agreement for approval and subsequently submit this agreement to the Bishop.
7. If the ministerial agreement is approved by the Bishop, the Office of the Diaconate will notify by letter all parties involved concerning the dates of the official termination of one assignment and the beginning of the new assignment. A deacon may not leave his assignment until he has received the official letter of appointment to his new assignment by the Director.

**It is understood that the Bishop reserves the right to meet with the deacon at any point in this process.**

### **C. Request for Transfer of a Deacon from a Pastor or Supervisor**

There may be occasions when the request for the transfer of a deacon comes from the supervisor. In those cases, the following procedure will be followed

1. The pastor or supervisor will notify the Office of the Diaconate in writing in order to arrange a meeting to discuss the reasons for the request for the transfer of the assigned deacon.
2. The Director may then meet with the deacon and the pastor or supervisor to discuss the reasons for the requested transfer. The deacon should be given the opportunity to participate in these initial discussions.
3. At this point, the Director will inform the Bishop of the pastor/supervisor's request for the transfer of the deacon. The Bishop will consider the request in terms of reasons given, the needs of the diocese, and the recommendation of the Director
4. If the Bishop approves the request of the pastor/supervisor and the recommendations of the Directors, then the Director will consult with the deacon relative to the specifics of a new assignment and/or to discuss with the deacon those requests for diaconal services which have been received by the Office of the Diaconate from other pastors, department heads, and chaplains.
5. Modern communication methods may be used to discuss information (email, teleconferencing, etc.)

**From this point, the process will continue, beginning with Step #5 on the previous page under "Request for a transfer from the deacon himself."**

### **D. Request for a Transfer in the Discernment of the Director**

The Director may initiate the transfer of a deacon. Some of the reasons which may prompt the consideration of the transfer of a deacon by the Director are the changing needs of the diocese, the availability of deacons in the overall diocesan mission, or a change in the staff of a parish or agency which would alter the original ministerial agreement.

If such a consideration is made, the following procedure will be observed

1. The Director will meet with the Bishop to present the request for the transfer of the deacon along with their reasons for the transfer.
2. If the Bishop approves the initial request from the Director, then the Director may meet jointly with the deacon and the supervisor to present the need and to discuss the reasons for the request for the transfer.

3. It will be the responsibility of the Director to consult with the deacon about the next assignment in terms of the requests for diaconal services which have been sent to the Diaconate Office or in terms of the Director's own recommendation for a specific assignment.
4. The Director will then present the recommendation of the next assignment to the Bishop.
5. If the Bishop approves the recommendation, the Director will notify both the deacon and the prospective pastor or supervisor relative to the Bishop's approval and the drawing up of a ministerial agreement with the deacon.

*From this point, we will follow Steps # 6 & 7 as listed on page 17 under "Request for a transfer from the deacon himself."*

**It is understood that the Bishop reserves the right to meet with the deacon at any point in this process.**

### **III. CONTINUING EDUCATION OF DEACONS**

#### **A. Purpose**

An increasingly educated society demands that deacons be knowledgeable and reliable witnesses of the Faith and spokesmen for the Church's teachings. Continuing Education for deacons is a requirement that ensures that every deacon in the Diocese of Worcester pursues a plan of education throughout his life in order to remain currently informed about the Church's teachings.

The subject matter of all continuing education must relate to the charitable, liturgical, sacramental, and theological aspects of the deacon's ministry. This continuing education should include the gathering of background information to nourish current ministry or to prepare for future ministry. Other courses that help one in ministry or prepare one to better serve the People of God should also be included.

As professionals in ministry, deacons need constantly to renew themselves with practical continuing education in order to affirm self-confidence and to maintain competence in their ministry. All deacons should demonstrate to the Church that they remain professionally accountable. This is a program based upon self-motivation and self-direction and designed to enhance each deacon's ability to serve the Church of Worcester in the future.

#### **B. Requirements**

Each deacon shall complete a minimum of thirty (30) hours of Continuing Education during every reporting period of the calendar year between January and December. *Credit hours may*

*be earned in any or all of the four categories listed below. At least two (2) hours shall be devoted to the study of homiletics each year.* When the diocese offer workshops and other programs related to homiletics it is expected that all deacons will participate.

### **C. Sources for Continuing Education**

1. **National and Regional Conferences** -- These conferences usually provide excellent sources of continuing education through noteworthy keynote speakers and workshop presenters. At the end of such gatherings, certificates of attendance and participation are offered and contain the number of contact and/or credit hours issued for that conference. Registration receipts will be accepted as verification of attendance.

Deacons should consult with the Director prior to registering for these conferences in order to determine the number of credit hours that will be applicable toward the thirty (30) mandatory hours for the calendar year. The National Association of Diaconate Directors and Regional Conferences are pre-approved.

2. **Formal Programs** -- Continuing Education activities shall include those that are approved and offered by the Diocese, colleges, agencies of the Diocese, hospitals, and social service institutions. All workshops, programs, and other activities offered by the Diocese or any of its departments shall be deemed approved unless specifically stated to the contrary. Count one credit for each classroom hour attended.
3. **Self-Study** -- Self-study credit may be given for viewing videotapes or DVDs, listening to audiotapes or CDs, and reading written materials. These may include books, religious publications, magazines and periodicals. **Self-Study materials must be related to diaconal ministry. Count one credit hour for each thirty (30) pages of reading and one credit hour for each hour of viewing or listening.** Periodicals will have a maximum of 3 hours per year.
4. **Research and Publication** -- Credit may be earned through writing based on research. The subject matter for research must be approved by the Director, and the deacon must publish his research in the form of an article, chapter, or book written, in whole or in part, by the deacon himself.

### **D. Reporting Period**

Each reporting period shall end in December of that year and the Annual Report shall be filed with the Office of the Diaconate no later than December 15. While it is not necessary to submit more than thirty (30) hours of contact hours, deacons are encouraged to submit all their continuing education activities so that their educational file may be complete and up-to-date.

**See Appendix B: Annual Report Form** (Refer to diocesan website for form)



#### **E. How to Count Credit Hours**

1. **Formal Activities** -- Credit for attending approved continuing education activities shall be based on net actual instruction time. These activities may include classes, workshops, lectures, panel discussions, or film instruction in organized presentations.
2. **Tapes, CDs or DVDs** -- Credit for viewing video material or listening to audio material shall be based on the actual running time, i.e., one credit hour for every hour of viewing or listening.
3. **Reading Material** -- Credit for reading material shall be based on the number of pages read, i.e., one hour of credit for every thirty (30) pages. Periodicals will have a maximum of 3 hours per year.

**N.B.:** Many books and audio/visual material are available through the library in the Religious Education Resource Room at the Chancery. A limited number of these resources are located in the Office of the Diaconate. Funds have been allocated for each fiscal year to add a substantial number of these items to the Library of the Diaconate Office. A request may be made to have these items mailed. Deacons and their wives are encouraged to take advantage of these resources as often as possible. (A diaconate lending library is available on our website)

4. **Course Work** -- Credit for approved course work sponsored by our Diocese, or at any other approved institution, shall be based on the number of contact hours, that is, one hour of credit for each contact hour.

#### **F. Activities Not Acceptable for Credit Hours**

1. Travel time to and from classes or activities
2. Informal meetings and discussions
3. Prayer services and liturgies
4. Parish Council meetings
5. Social gatherings
6. Diocesan functions
7. Courses not related to ministerial service

#### **G. Accountability**

Each deacon is responsible for fulfilling the requirements outlined in this policy for Continuing Education and shall submit the year-end Reporting Forms to the Office of the Diaconate at the appropriate time.

1. **Filing of the Annual Report** -- Each deacon shall file the Annual Report with the Office of the Diaconate no later than December 15. The form for filing this report shall be provided for the Deacons by the Director.

**See Appendix B: Annual Report Form** (Refer to diocesan website for form)

2. **Non-Compliance Shown on the Annual Report** -- If a deacon files an Annual Reporting Form which fails to show compliance with the basic requirements of the Continuing Education policy, the Director shall notify the deacon in writing, via phone or email of such non-compliance and shall specifically identify the deficiencies. If the deacon fails or refuses to comply with the requirements within one week from the date of the written notice, the Director shall notify the Bishop, and the deacon may be placed on an Administrative Leave of Absence for a period of time determined by the director with the approval of the bishop.
3. **Failure to File an Annual Report** -- If a deacon fails to file an Annual Reporting Form within one week after the end of the Reporting Period, the Director shall notify the deacon in writing, via phone or email of such a failure to file. The deacon shall have one week from the date of such notice to file an Annual Reporting Form showing compliance with the basic requirements of this Continuing Education policy. If the deacon fails again to file, the Director shall notify the Bishop, and the deacon may be placed on an Administrative Leave of Absence for a period of time determined by the director with the approval of the bishop until requirements are met for the Annual Report in question.
4. **Exemptions** -- With good cause, a deacon may file a written request, or an email request for exemption from compliance with any of the requirements of this policy. "Good Cause" exists when a deacon is unable to comply with the requirements of the Continuing Education policy because of illness, medical disability, extraordinary hardship, or extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the deacon.
5. **Extension of Filing Time** -- Deacons may file for an extension of time
  - To comply in general
  - To comply with a deficiency notice
  - To file the Annual Reporting Form.

Such requests for exemption or extension must be filed with the Director before the due date of the Annual Reporting Form.

6. **Spouses** -- Wives of deacons are invited and encouraged but not required to participate fully in the diaconal program of continuing education. Occasionally, a session will be limited to deacons only or to wives only.

#### **IV. CONTINUING SPIRITUAL FORMATION OF DEACONS**

Very importantly, Continuing Spiritual Formation includes ongoing development of the spiritual dimension in the life of a deacon. Therefore, the following endeavors should be considered minimum requirements by the deacon to maintain a successful and fruitful spiritual formation program.

##### **A. Liturgy of the Hours**

Deacons are not bound by the universal Church to pray the entire Liturgy of the Hours everyday. They are, however, obliged to recite morning and evening prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours and should not hold themselves lightly excused from this obligation.

##### **B. Annual Retreat**

The Code of Canon Law states that “clerics are also bound to make a retreat according to the prescriptions of particular law.” Accordingly, the Bishop requires that every deacon in active ministry and, if married, a deacon’s wife should make an annual retreat in order to enrich one’s spiritual life and nurture its growth. The retreat should be at least a weekend experience, and the format of the retreat is left to the choice of the individual deacon and his wife.

The deacon may fulfill this obligation by attending the annual Worcester Diocesan Diaconate Retreat, usually scheduled for the weekend following Labor Day. The retreat is specifically designed for deacons of the Diocese of Worcester. Retired deacons and widows of deacons are always encouraged and welcomed to participate in the communal Diaconate Retreat.

A deacon may, however, fulfill this obligation through participation in another retreat experience of his choice. **If a deacon does not choose to take part in the annual Diaconate Retreat for the diocese, then he must contact the Office of the Diaconate in writing to notify the Directors that he will make his retreat elsewhere.** He must also state the specific times and location of his retreat. Other retreats include private retreats, directed retreats, retreats organized by a deacon class or a group of deacons, couples retreats, preached/directed retreats at local retreat centers, etc.

##### **C. Day of Recollection**

Each deacon is urged to participate in at least one day of recollection during the calendar year. This day may be one of several sponsored by the Office of the Diaconate or may be one privately scheduled by a group of deacons. There are times during the Church year when Days of Recollection are most valuable, for example, during the great liturgical seasons of Advent-Christmas and Lent-Easter.

##### **D. Spiritual Direction**

Deacons are required to have a spiritual director with whom they confer regularly. In order to assist deacons in selecting a spiritual director, when available, the Office of the

Diaconate provides a referral list of the names of recommended directors. The Directors will also assist any deacon's wife who is seeking a spiritual director.

#### **E. Area Meetings**

Area meetings are to be scheduled each year for prayers, discussion, sharing, and help in personal development and ministry. These groups are assembled and the meetings facilitated by a deacon who has been appointed the Area Coordinator by the Director.

The general areas of the diocese include the following:

- Area One:** **Deaneries I, II, and III** – Leicester, Paxton, Rochdale, and all Worcester parishes except Our Lady of the Rosary, St. Bernard, St. Christopher, St. George, and St. Joan of Arc
- Area Two:** **Deaneries IV, V, VI** – Jefferson, Princeton, Rutland, Sterling, West Boylston, House of Correction Chaplaincy, Worcester parishes of Our Lady of the Rosary, St. Bernard, St. Christopher, St. George, and St. Joan of Arc, Auburn, Grafton, Millbury, South Grafton, Sutton, Boylston, Northborough, North Grafton, Shrewsbury, Southborough, Westboro
- Area Three:** **Deaneries VII, IX** -- Charlton, Dudley, North Oxford, Oxford, Southbridge, Sturbridge, Webster, Barre, South Barre, Wheelwright, Brookfield, East Brookfield, North Brookfield, West Brookfield, Gilbertville Spencer, Warren, West Warren
- Area Four:** **Deanery VIII** – Blackstone, East Douglas, Hopedale, Linwood, Manchaug, Mendon, Milford, Millville, Northbridge, Upton, Uxbridge, Whitinsville
- Area Five:** **Deaneries X, XI** – Berlin, Bolton, Clinton, Harvard, Lancaster, Leominster, Lunenburg, Fitchburg
- Area Six:** **Deanery XII** – Ashburnham, Athol, Baldwinville, East Templeton, Gardner, Otter River, Petersham, South Ashburnham, Westminster, Winchedon

#### **F. Support Groups**

Each deacon in the Diocese of Worcester should participate in a diaconal Support Group that will meet several times a year. Wives of deacons are encouraged to join their husbands in attending support group meetings. Retired deacons and widows of deacons are also encouraged to continue their participation within a support group of their choice.

It is recommended that support groups be formed within geographical areas throughout the diocese in order to minimize distance and travel time. Other groupings may be formed to respond to the needs of individual deacons.

## **G. Annual Report**

At the end of each calendar year, each deacon shall file a report regarding his ongoing spiritual development according to the requirements stated in this section of the policy relative to spiritual formation. Report forms will be made available by the Office of the Diaconate and must be filed no later than December 15.

## **V. SEPARATED AND DIVORCED DEACONS**

The teaching of the Church on marriage and family is very important in the diaconal community of the Diocese of Worcester. However, some married couples have suffered the pain of separation and divorce. The demands made on married life can sometimes become difficult and overwhelming, causing couples to question the integrity of their relationship. The ministry of the deacon, together with the expectations of the community in which he ministers, can also add to this situation. When there is either a separation or a divorce of a deacon and his wife, the Directors will meet with the couple or with each individual to assess the situation and the development of an appropriate response.

If the couple has not sought counseling, then the Directors will arrange for such counseling.

A separation or a divorce will require an evaluation of the status of the deacon. The Bishop will normally recommend an “Administrative Leave of Absence.” During this leave, the deacon will obtain appropriate assistance to respond to the physical, psychological, and spiritual adjustment of his present situation. This assistance will also be made available to the deacon’s wife.

If a deacon has been legally separated or divorced, he is required to accept the discipline of celibacy. Also, if his marriage has been annulled by the Church decree, he is required to accept the discipline of celibacy.

Depending on the nature of the case and the absence of scandal, the deacon may or may not be reinstated to “active” status in the diocese. Each request for reinstatement will be reviewed by the Bishop and the Directors.

## **VI. PREACHING FACULTIES OF DEACONS**

### **A. Newly Ordained Deacons**

Upon ordination, deacons are generally given ordinary preaching faculties, that is, they may preach at all liturgical functions. However, if the Directors determine that these faculties should be postponed in the case of any particular deacon, they will so inform the Bishop and recommend that the exercise of the faculties to preach be granted at a time other than ordination. The deacon will be fully informed of this decision prior to his ordination.

Pastors, as well as newly ordained deacons, will be notified by the Office of the Diaconate that newly ordained deacons must be evaluated and must, therefore, give at least three Lord’s Day homilies during the first six months of assigned ministry. These homilies must be either audio-taped or video-taped and must be submitted to the Office of the Diaconate soon after

they are recorded. The Directors and others involved in the Diaconate program will evaluate these homilies and in writing or via email will apprise the deacon of the results of the critiques.

Preaching faculties granted at ordination are provisional. For bonafide reasons based upon reports from pastor/supervisors, preaching faculties may be suspended. Reinstatement may take place once the Deacon has proven readiness for preaching. This reinstatement would hold a provisional status and at the end of a three year period full preaching faculties could be granted.

#### **B. All Deacons**

In every case, whether faculties are provisional or permanent, all deacons are required to fulfill the yearly Continuing Education Academic/Spiritual Formation Policy requirements, including the Proclamation and Preaching Workshops offered by the Office of the Diaconate in various parish churches

During the Proclamation and Preaching workshops, deacons will be asked to proclaim and to preach upon the Sacred Scriptures for Lord's Day Masses. Deacons are asked to prepare a written outline to be given to the leaders of the workshops. Each deacon will receive the completed evaluation forms relative to his own proclamation and homily. One copy will be kept for the files in the Office of the Diaconate, and one will be sent to the pastor of the parish.

### **VII. SPECIFIC POLICIES FOR DEACONS**

#### **A. Personnel Profile**

The Office of the Diaconate shall store and keep current a personnel file on each deacon, active or otherwise. Only persons concerned with diaconal personnel files will have access to these files, namely, the Directors, staff and the Bishop.

#### **B. Ecclesiastical Attire**

In the Diocese of Worcester, the deacon is not permitted to wear a Roman collar. In fact, the Code of Canon Law (c.288) exempts deacons from the obligation of wearing ecclesiastical attire (as opposed to liturgical vesture). The Bishop may permit a deacon to wear a Roman collar to facilitate the deacon's ministry in specific, non-parochial situations, such as hospital and prison chaplaincies. However, the individual deacon must petition the Bishop, in writing, through the Director, for this permission.

#### **C. Ecclesiastical Title**

Deacons in the Diocese of Worcester may not commonly use the ecclesiastical title "Rev Mr." The appropriate title of address in conversation and correspondence is "Deacon." However, the title "Rev. Mr." must be used on official ecclesiastical documents.



## **D. Identification Card**

Upon ordination, the deacon will receive an identification card indicating that he is, indeed, an incardinated deacon in the Diocese of Worcester. The deacon may wear the official lapel pin, authorized by the National Association of Diaconate Directors.

## **E. Absence from the Diocese**

If a deacon knows that he will be absent from the diocese for longer than one month and in temporary residence elsewhere, he must write to the Office of the Diaconate and so inform the Director of the proposed length of his absence, his mailing address and telephone number. Since he is incardinated into the Diocese of Worcester, this procedure provides for mutual accountability during the time of absence.

If the deacon plans to become involved in formal diaconal ministry in the diocese in which he takes up temporary residence, he must obtain verification of his diaconal status and a letter of introduction prior to his departure.

In seeking formal ministry, it is expected that the deacon will follow the procedure for application specified by the diocese in which he will take up temporary residence.

The same holds forth for any deacon who moves permanently outside the canonical jurisdiction of the Diocese of Worcester and seeks incardination into the diocese in which he will reside. Again it is expected that he will follow the procedure for application specified by the diocese into which he will move permanently and in accord with the Code of Canon Law relative to the excardination/incardination of clerics.

### **1. Letters of Complaint and Concern**

In cases of signed letters of concern (health, etc.) or complaint, the writer will be contacted for permission to use his or her name in discussing the matter with the deacon about whom the letter has been written. In matters of serious complaint or concern, the Director will investigate the matter thoroughly and make recommendations to the Bishop. As determined by prudence and brotherly concern and in response to the matter at hand, the Bishop himself or the Director will contact the deacon in question. The deacon will have the right to read the letter and to know the name of the writer. Ordinarily, the writer will receive a reply.

Only signed letters will receive responses. Unsigned letters will be ignored and destroyed. **However, all letters, signed or anonymous, which allege illegal or sexual misconduct, will be submitted to the proper diocesan authorities in keeping with the diocesan policy on sexual misconduct. Both discretion and just concern for the deacon and any other person(s) named in the allegation will be carefully observed.**

In cases of telephone complaints, when a caller identifies himself/herself, the name and telephone number or address of the caller will be obtained and the matter addressed in the procedure as outlined directly above in “Letters of Complaint and Concern.”

2. **Petitions** - Petitions concerning the appointment or transfer of a deacon will be ignored.
3. **Appeals Due Process** - A deacon has the right to appeal to the Bishop regarding any grievance or alleged injustice. The procedure of due process as established by the Diocese applies also to deacons, even though the statute does not use the term "deacon." The Diocesan Statute states: *"When conflict and differences arise between the Pastor and the Associate Pastor (now Parochial Vicar) which cannot be amicably settled by them, let them make use of mediation facilities available and acceptable to both parties or, if necessary, refer the matter to the Bishop."*

#### **F. Incardination and the Granting of Faculties**

A deacon is ordained for the service of the diocesan church. Ordained by the Bishop, the deacon stands in direct relationship with his diocesan Bishop in communion with whom and under whose authority he exercises his ministry. By virtue of his ordination, a deacon is canonically incardinated into a specific diocese. The Bishop may confer faculties upon a deacon as specified within the Code of Canon Law, the instructions found in liturgical books of ceremonies, rituals, blessings, and other sources pertaining to his ministry.

#### **G. Excardination of Deacon from Diocese Seeks Incardination into Diocese of Worcester**

To assist a deacon who, with his family, has recently located his residence within the canonical jurisdiction of the Diocese of Worcester and who seeks incardination into the Diocese of Worcester, the following procedure is recommended:

- a. If a deacon seeks to be incardinated into the Diocese of Worcester, he must be residing in and registered at a local parish for at least two months before such a request is made.
- b. As soon as he decides to seek incardination after the two-month period, the deacon must send a letter of petition to the Bishop and at the same time, request a personal interview with the Director.
- c. The deacon will be asked to submit the following credentials:
  1. all official documents related to his ordination
  2. a transcript of his academic preparation
  3. letters of recommendation and permission for the deacon to seek incardination in the Diocese of Worcester from his (arch) bishop, the director(s) of the Diaconate and the pastor of the parish to which he was last assigned.
- d. Following his interview with the Director of the Diaconate, a series of interviews will be arranged with two members of the Selection Committee and then with the bishop.

## **VIII. THE STATUS OF DEACONS**

### **A. Active Deacon**

A deacon in good standing is one who has been assigned by the bishop to ministry in a parish or agency, department, or chaplaincy within the diocese and who is satisfactorily fulfilling the responsibilities as specified in the ministerial agreement

### **B. Inactive Deacon**

An inactive deacon is one who is not functioning in the ministry to which he has been assigned and who has not requested any leave of absence or sought laicization. During this period of inactivity, the deacon does not enjoy the faculties of the diocese. This deacon will meet with the Director of the Diaconate to review the reasons for inactivity and to explore remedies.

### **C. Unassigned Deacon**

An unassigned deacon is one who is in good standing but who has no specific ministerial responsibilities to which he has been officially assigned. An unassigned deacon retains his diocesan faculties. However, an “unassigned” status is always seen as temporary, and a resolution must be reached as soon as possible.

### **D. Retired Deacon**

By diocesan ordinance, a deacon who reaches the age of seventy-five must submit to the bishop a letter requesting retirement from active ministry. This letter must be forwarded to the Director at least three months prior to the Deacon’s seventy-fifth birthday. If the Deacon is in good health and wishes to remain active, he should so state this in his letter. If he experiences poor health or any other serious difficulty, a deacon may petition the bishop for retirement before he reaches the age of seventy-five. If a retired deacon seeks to retain his full faculties, he is, therefore, obliged to fulfill the regulations as outlined in the Continuing Education Policy and to attend the Preaching and Proclamation Workshop offered every other year.

### **E. Suspended Deacon**

For grave reasons, a deacon may be suspended by the bishop and in some instances automatically by the law itself. For certain infractions, specified by the Code of Canon Law, he may be removed from all active ministry. A suspended deacon may not function as or represent himself as a deacon in any parish, agency, department, or chaplaincy of the diocese until the cause(s) for the suspension is resolved.

## **F. Laicized Deacon**

A laicized deacon is one who is returned, voluntarily or involuntarily, to the lay state by the Holy Father. He loses all rights, privileges, offices and is relieved of obligations pertaining to the clerical state. The procedures for this process as prescribed by Canon Law must be followed.

## **IX. VARIOUS LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

### **A. Voluntary/Temporary Leave of Absence**

If a deacon seeks a temporary leave of absence from official assignment by the diocesan bishop, the following procedure will be observed:

1. The deacon must first write a formal request for a leave to the Director of the Diaconate. The Director will meet with the deacon to discuss the reasons for the request for a leave of absence, i.e., personal problems, family circumstances, temporary relocation outside the diocese, etc.
2. The Director will then present the petition to the bishop for final response granting the leave of absence.

A voluntary leave of absence will be granted for a period of time agreed upon by the Director and the deacon. The situation will be evaluated upon the expiration of the time period and may be extended if all agree that an extension is both necessary and advisable. A deacon on a voluntary leave of absence may request a return to ministry before the agreed-upon date of expiration.

A deacon on temporary leave still possesses good standing in the diocese and is encouraged to participate in all spiritual, social, educational activities within the diaconal community. However, the deacon on temporary leave does not enjoy diaconal and diocesan faculties and may not function in any ministerial capacity. If a deacon on temporary leave wishes to function ministerially for a specific reason, he must petition the bishop through the Director. If granted, this permission is given in writing by the bishop.

### **B. Sick Leave**

A sick leave is granted to a deacon because of poor or declining health. A deacon on sick leave will continue to enjoy the faculties of the diocese.

### **C. Administrative Leave of Absence**

The bishop grants an administrative leave for reasons not related to health, family circumstances, or temporary relocation outside the diocese. A deacon on administrative leave will be relieved of all responsibility for any ecclesiastical office or ministry and all active ministry. He may not function or represent himself as a deacon while this leave remains in effect. Faculties will be suspended pending the resolution of the problem which brought about the imposition of this administrative leave.

### **X. DIACONAL CELIBACY AND REMARRIAGE**

Prior to 1997, married deacons who became widowed after ordination were unable to contract another marriage. Ordination to the Diaconate was an impediment to entering into a second marriage as noted in Canon 1087: “Persons who are in holy orders invalidly attempt marriage.”

However, it became apparent that this norm caused serious difficulties to those deacons who had become widowed after ordination yet who also wanted to remain active in ministry. The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments was entrusted to consider the matter and to offer a recommendation to the Holy Father.

In June of 1997, the Holy Father approved a ruling formulated by the above-noted dicastery (see footnote, page 33) which enunciated three conditions under which a widowed deacon could apply for dispensation from the impediment imposed by Canon 1087.

Taken individually, any one of the following three conditions may offer sufficient cause to seek a dispensation from the impediment as stated in Canon 1087:

- ✓ There is a great and proven usefulness of the ministry of the deacon to the diocese to which he belongs.
- ✓ He has children of such young ages as to be in need of motherly care.
- ✓ He has parents/parents-in-law who are elderly and in need of care.

Therefore, if a widowed deacon seeks to be dispensed from the impediment of Canon 1087, he must formally submit in writing a letter to the Bishop through the Office of the Diaconate, stating clearly the reason(s) for which he is seeking a dispensation from the impediment to marry a second time. The Office of the Diaconate will, in turn, present the petition to the Bishop who will decide, after consultation with the Directors and the Judicial Vicar, whether or not to proceed in forwarding the petition to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. In the name of the Holy Father, this dicastery will adjudicate the matter, either granting or denying the petition for dispensation.

## **XI. GUIDELINE UPON THE DEATH OF A DEACON**

### **A. Funeral Policy**

Because a deacon is an ordained minister of the church, the family must make funeral arrangements in consultation with the Office for Worship and the Office of the Diaconate. The Director of the Office for Worship, who represents the Bishop in planning liturgical ceremonies, will direct all liturgical preparations with the family, honoring the requests of the deacon. These requests are kept on file in the Office of the Diaconate.

**See Appendix “C”: *Funeral Form for Deacons*** (Refer to diocesan website for form)

### **B. Notification of a Deacon’s Death**

The family is asked to notify the Office of the Diaconate upon the death of a deacon. The Bishop, the deacon’s Pastor Supervisor, the Pastor of his home parish, the Office for Worship, and the Office of Communications will then be called. Notification of a Deacon’s death will be published in the diocesan and local newspaper.

### **C. Making Liturgical Preparations**

Within the guidelines of approved liturgical norms, the wishes and plans of the deacon (on file in the Office of the Diaconate), his spouse and his family will be accommodated as much as possible.

The Office for Worship will guide the family in liturgical preparations for both the wake service and funeral liturgy, that is, in making the selection of hymns, and choosing readers, gift-bearers, and those who place the pall over the casket at the funeral liturgy.

### **D. Liturgical Celebrations**

Because a deacon enjoys clerical status in the life of the Church, his family shall note the following:

#### **1. The Vigil/Wake Service**

- a. The body may lie in state in the church and if so will be clothed in the liturgical vesture proper to a deacon, i.e., with an alb, a stole and a dalmatic or an alb with stole.
- b. The Book of Gospels, as a symbol of the office, may be placed on or in the vicinity of the bier. A cross or a funeral pall may be used in place of the Book of Gospels if the casket is closed during the wake. The American flag is an important symbol for those who have served our country. It must be folded properly and may be placed near the bier. The flag cannot be draped over or placed upon the casket when the casket is reposed inside the church.



- c. The Director of the Diaconate or a delegate will be the Presider for the Vigil.
- d. The body may be laid out in the funeral home for calling hours.
- e. If the deacon has not already chosen the homilist, then the family is entitled to make that selection. If the homilist is a deacon, then he must have the faculty to preach.

## **2. The Funeral Liturgy**

- a. The Bishop of the diocese or his appointed representative will be the principal celebrant of the funeral liturgy.
- b. The body of the deacon is offered the same reverence normally accorded to a bishop or a priest and, therefore, is entitled to have his head facing out to the people.
- c. Every consideration will be given to provide proper seating for the members of the deacon's family so that their places will not be obstructed during the liturgy.
- d. If the deacon has not already chosen the homilist, the family is entitled to do so. If the homilist is a deacon, then he must have the faculty to preach.

## **3. Burial Service**

- a. The family may request a deacon or a priest to lead the prayers at the Rite of Committal, which takes place at the cemetery or another place of interment.
- b. In the case of cremation, it is the expectation of the Bishop that the body be present during the wake service and the funeral liturgy. Cremation must follow the funeral liturgy, and the ashes must be interred or buried in accord with the Church's teaching and liturgical regulations.

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### **Footnote:**

By the word "dicasteries" are understood the Secretariat of State, Congregations, Tribunals, Councils and Offices. The "dicasteries" are composed of the cardinal prefect or the presiding archbishop, a body of cardinals and of some bishops, assisted by a secretary, consultors, senior administrators, and a suitable number of officials. They deal with matters which are reserved to the Apostolic See and those which exceed the competence of individual bishops and their conferences, as well as those matters committed to them by the Supreme Pontiff.

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## **APPENDIX “A”**

### **MINISTERIAL AGREEMENT FORM**

# Office of the Diaconate

Diocese of Worcester

49 Elm St.

Worcester, Massachusetts 01609

Deacon: \_\_\_\_\_

## MINISTRY AGREEMENT

### Pastor/Agency Supervisor and Deacon

The assignment of a deacon is a direct appointment of the Bishop and reflects a threefold ministry: *Service of the Word*, *Service of the Altar*, and *Service of Charity*. This ministry encompasses specific expectations of the deacon's services in the parish or agency under the direction and guidance of the pastor or supervisor as well as the parish's or agency's responsibility to pay for expenses incurred by the deacon's ministry.

- I. **SERVICE OF THE WORD** is far-ranging and includes, in addition to proclaiming the gospel, preaching, offering catechetical instruction, counseling, instructing catechumens, giving retreats, conducting renewal programs. (These responsibilities may not be all-inclusive and may vary week to week).

**\* What will be his specific responsibilities ?**

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Total Hours Each Week \_\_\_\_\_

**PREACHING-** (Guidelines state that the deacon *must preach* at least once each month at Lord's Day celebrations during weekend liturgies if preaching faculties have been granted)

Deacon will preach \_\_\_\_\_ times each month

- II. **SERVICE OF THE ALTAR** centers, above all, on the Eucharist, but it includes other sacraments as well. In addition to offering the petitions in the Prayer of the Faithful, the deacon prepares the gifts and distributes Holy Communion at the Lord's Table. He solemnly baptizes children and adults, witnesses marriages in the name of the Church, brings Holy Viaticum to the dying, and presides over wakes, funerals, and burial services. He presides over Liturgies of the Word, the Liturgy of the Hours, and exposition and benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament. He may lead non-sacramental reconciliation services, conduct prayer services for the sick and dying, and administer certain of the Church's sacramental. (These responsibilities may not be all-inclusive and may vary week to week).

**\* What will be his specific responsibilities ?**

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Total Hours Each Week \_\_\_\_\_

- III. **SERVICE OF CHARITY** is as extensive as are human needs. Deacons minister in prisons and hospitals. They visit the homebound and people in nursing homes. They serve the mentally ill, the chemically dependent, the abused, battered, the old, the young, the abandoned, the dying, the bereaved, immigrants, refugees and the victims of racial and ethnic discrimination. Through this wide range of service of charity, the deacon carries out the biblical mandate to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and give relief to all in need. (These responsibilities may not be all-inclusive and may vary week to week).

**\* What will be his specific responsibilities ?**

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Total Hours Each Week \_\_\_\_\_

**IV. ROLES REQUESTED BY PASTOR**

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Total Hours Each Week \_\_\_\_\_

**V. AREAS OF NEEDED COOPERATION (regular meetings with pastor/deacon, staff meetings, parish council, finance committee, religious education board, etc.)**

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**VI. PARISH OR AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Assuming the payment of the annual assessment fee to the Diaconate Office each year.
- Assuming the cost of the annual retreat for the deacon and his wife (not to exceed \$500.00 total).
- Providing proper vestments (stoles and if possible, dalmatics) for the deacon's use.
- Reimbursing the deacon for "out of pocket expenses" each month not to exceed \$85. Mileage reimbursement is to be calculated at \$.40 per mile. Deacons are to submit a list of expenses each month to their pastor and/or supervisor.
- Providing the deacon with suitable space in which to perform his various ministries.
- Assuming the cost of on-going academic & spiritual formation as required by the Diaconate Office.

Other expenses approved by the pastor will include:

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The areas covered by this agreement have been discussed by the pastor and the deacon and his wife, and they have reached an understanding of their roles and responsibilities. This agreement will be reviewed every three years. If the pastoral leadership changes during the tenure of this agreement, the Diaconate Office suggests a three-month period in which to evaluate the working relationship between the deacon and the pastor/agency supervisor. If the deacon is to continue in the same setting, then a new agreement shall be submitted to the Diaconate Office for approval.

\* One third of the total hours devoted to parish/agency ministry are to be devoted to the Word and Altar. The limit of 12 -15 hours does not apply to those hired as full time, salaried deacons in a parish or agency.

It should be understood that all of the responsibilities in each category are not performed on a regular basis each week. Some are performed as the need arises, and others are performed each week on a regular basis. For instance, marriage/ baptism preparations do not occur every week. Funerals, wakes, etc. do not occur on a regular basis, nor does the giving of retreats and /or renewal programs.

**The important thing to remember is that the part-time, non-salaried deacon should not exceed the agreed upon 12-15 hours of total ministry in the parish each week.**

**Please check one of the following:**

This agreement is for a part-time, non-salaried assignment (12-15 hours per week) \_\_\_\_\_

This agreement is for a full-time, salaried assignment (40+ hours per week) \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL HOURS COMMITTED TO PARISH/AGENCY \_\_\_\_\_**

Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Deacon \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Wife of Deacon \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Director of the Diaconate \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Bishop: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

***Please return this agreement signed by the Pastor, Deacon and Spouse to the Office of the Diaconate. Once the agreement has been approved and signed by the Director and the Ordinary of the Diocese, copies will be forwarded to the pastor or agency supervisor and the deacon.***



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## **APPENDIX “B”**

### **ANNUAL REPORT FORM**

**OFFICE OF THE DIACONATE**  
**Diocese of Worcester**

**Individual Deacon's Annual Report**

Deacon \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTIONS**

**PART I** --- Complete *only* those sections that pertain to you.

**PART II** -- Complete *all* sections.

*Please complete and mail this Annual Report in the pre-addressed envelope to the Office of the Diaconate no later than December 15 of this year*

**PART I -- CONTINUING EDUCATION**  
(Complete only those sections that pertain to you)

**A. NATIONAL/REGIONAL CONFERENCES**

*Give name of conference, location, organization sponsoring event, date of conference, contact hours for keynote speaker & number of workshops attended.*

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**B. DIOCESAN sponsored conferences.**

*Give sessions attended, speakers' names, dates, and contact hours.*

Keynote Sessions: \_\_\_\_\_

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**C..COURSES/ WORKSHOPS/ PROGRAMS**

*List courses taken in the Diocesan Collaborative Institute, colleges, agencies, etc. Give title, teacher, contact hours, and location.  
1 Credit for each contact hour.*

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_

**D. SELF-STUDY (BOOKS, AUDIO & VIDEO TAPES)**

Please list the titles, authors of books and the number of pages read for each book.. List the titles, presenters, of the *tapes listened to or viewed and the length of each*. **Books:** 1 credit hour for every 30 pages read.

**Tapes:** 1 credit hour for every hour of listening or viewing

- a.) \_\_\_\_\_
- b.) \_\_\_\_\_
- c.) \_\_\_\_\_
- d.) \_\_\_\_\_
- e.) \_\_\_\_\_
- f.) \_\_\_\_\_
- g.) \_\_\_\_\_
- h.) \_\_\_\_\_

**E. RESEARCH & PUBLICATION**

Directors must approve subject matter. The deacon must publish results in the form of an article, chapter or a Book. Published material or written confirmation material that will be published must accompany this form.

*Credit hours granted depend on depth of research.*

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**F. AREA MEETINGS ATTENDED:**

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ LOCATION \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ LOCATION \_\_\_\_\_

## **PART II -- CONTINUING SPIRITUAL FORMATION**

(Complete all Sections)

### **A. RETREAT**

List the Retreat you *and* your spouse made during this past year. Give place, location (city/state), whether retreat was communal, directed or private and the duration of retreat.

Deacon: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **B. DAYS OF RECOLLECTION & OTHER SPIRITUAL PROGRAMS**

*List place, presenter, location (city/state) and length of program*

a). \_\_\_\_\_

b). \_\_\_\_\_

c). \_\_\_\_\_

d). \_\_\_\_\_

### **C. PERSONAL SUPPORT GROUPS**

How many deacons or couples make up your support group? \_\_\_\_\_ Who is the group secretary \_\_\_\_\_  
How many times did you meet this year? \_\_\_\_\_ List months of each meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

a). \_\_\_\_\_ d). \_\_\_\_\_

b). \_\_\_\_\_ e). \_\_\_\_\_

c). \_\_\_\_\_ f). \_\_\_\_\_

### **D. SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR (frequency of meetings)**

List the name of your *current* Spiritual Director and give the frequency of meetings during this past year.

a). \_\_\_\_\_

(master form -- annual report) (For Office Use Only) ----- TOTAL HOURS CREDITED: ----- \_\_\_\_\_

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## **APPENDIX “C”**

### **FUNERAL PLANNING FORM FOR DEACONS**



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**OFFICE OF THE DIACONATE  
DIOCESE OF WORCESTER  
FUNERAL PLANNING FORM  
FOR**

**DEACON \_\_\_\_\_**

**REVISED AUGUST 2012**

## **FUNERAL PLANNING FORM**

Office of the Diaconate

Diocese of Worcester

*As the deacon is ordained cleric in the Church, and is subject to the Diocesan Bishop, the Diocese of Worcester works in collaboration with the deacon's family and the Office of the Diaconate to plan and prepare his funeral.*

*It is assumed therefore that every deacon upon his death will be afforded Catholic Funeral Rites as they are found in the Order of Christian Funerals and reflected in the Policy for Ecclesiastical Funeral Rites in the Diocese of Worcester. The Bishop of Worcester reserves the right to change or modify any decisions not in keeping with either of the afore mentioned documents.*

*The Bishop's delegate in this regard, the Director of the Office of Worship coordinates the Funeral Liturgy including the Wake, Vigil Service, and Funeral Mass and Committal in conjunction with the Office of the Diaconate and the family of the deceased, and the Funeral Home chosen by the family.*

*In all cases, every effort will be made to accommodate particular wishes of the deacon's family.*

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### **DEACONS INFORMATION**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street, PO Box, City/Town, State, Zip Code)

Phone Number: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Ordination: \_\_\_\_\_  
(month/day/year) (month/day/year)

Place of Ordination: \_\_\_\_\_

Ordaining Bishop: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(If spouse is deceased, please list next of kin and their relationship to you.)

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Parish Name, City or Town, Phone Number)

**Past Assignments in Chronological order:**

PARISH

CITY

YEAR FROM—TO


**Name of contact person who will work with Diocesan Officials in preparing and planning the Funeral.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street, PO Box, City/Town, State, Zip Code)

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Deacon's affiliation with Police Department, Fire Department, Knights of Columbus, Military, etc. If so please give details.**


Will they Provide and honor guard? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If an honor Guard will participate, Will they participate at the

Wake \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Funeral Mass \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If so, who should be contacted?


## **FUNERAL DIRECTOR**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street, PO Box, City/Town, State, Zip Code)

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## **PRESENTATION OF THE BODY**

*As the deacon is an ordained cleric in the church, the Diocesan Bishop, asks that each deacon be vested in the vestments of his office. This would be alb and stole and/or alb, Stole, and Dalmatic (all vestments are provided by family). The casket chosen may be the traditional style which opens at the top only or full couch casket which opens from head to foot.*

\_\_\_\_\_ Alb & Stole

\_\_\_\_\_ Alb. Stole and dalmatic

## **VIGIL SERVICE**

*It is both possible and preferable for the wake or visitation along with the Vigil Service for the deceased to take place in Church. However the Funeral Home may also be chosen for the visitation and/or Vigil Service. During the time of wake or visitation a Vigil Service for the deceased will be scheduled. It usually takes place at 7:00 P.M. the evening before the Funeral Mass.*

*\*The Diocesan Director of the Diaconate or a delegate will be the presider for the Vigil Service.*

Visitation/Wake will take place in \_\_\_\_\_ Church  
\_\_\_\_\_ Funeral Home  
\_\_\_\_\_ Hour of Visitation

Name of Church: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town: \_\_\_\_\_

Assisting Deacon: \_\_\_\_\_

Suggested Homilist: \_\_\_\_\_  
(If a Deacon, he must have preaching faculties)

**Words of Remembrance** One member of the family may speak in remembrance of the deceased for no longer than 3-5 minutes at the Vigil Service. No other opportunity will be afforded at the Funeral Mass.

**SCRIPTURE READINGS** – *(Scripture readings are ordinarily chosen by the homilist. However, the deacon may submit suggested readings which he wishes to have incorporated. All readings must be chosen from the Lectionary. Poems or other non-scriptural readings will not be permitted.)*

**Readers and  
Readings:**

**Old Testament:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Reader and Reading)*

**New Testament:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Reader and Reading)*

**Gospel:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Reader and Reading)*

**Suggested Vigil Musical Selections:** *Please make suggestions for hymns that could be included in Vigil Serve: N.B. Songs that are secular in nature will not be played in Church.*

**Hymns:** **Entrance Hymn** \_\_\_\_\_

**Recessional Hymn** \_\_\_\_\_

## **FUNERAL MASS**

*\*The Diocesan Bishop or his delegate will be the presider for the Funeral Mass. No other arrangements should be made.*

**Name of Church:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Assisting Deacon:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Suggested Homilist:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*(If a deacon, he must have preaching faculties)*

**SUGGESTED CONCELEBRANTS:** Please make 3 or 4 suggestions for priests that could be included at the Funeral Mass: N.B. Curial officials such as Auxiliary Bishop, Vicar General, Chancellor, Pastor of the Parish will automatically be assigned as designated concelebrants.

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_

**SCRIPTURE READINGS** – *(Scripture readings are ordinarily chosen by the homilist. However, the deacon may submit suggested readings which he wishes to have incorporated. All readings must be chosen from the Lectionary. Poems or other non-scriptural readings will not be permitted.)*

**Readers and  
Readings:**

Old Testament: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Reader and Reading)*

New Testament: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Reader and Reading)*

Gospel: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Reader and Reading)*

**FUNERAL PALL:** Please indicate 2, or 4 people you would like to place the pall on the casket at the Funeral

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_

**SACRED SYMBOL FOR THE CASKET:** *It is customary for the deacon to have the Book of Gospels placed upon the casket after the Funeral Pall has been placed. No other personal items other than the National Flag, if the Deacon is a veteran, will be placed on the casket.*

**LITURGICAL GIFTS:** Please indicate 2, 3, or 4 people you would like to bear the gifts of bread and wine to the Bishop at the Funeral Mass.

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_



**PALL BEARERS:** Please indicate 6 people you would like to be pall bearers at the Funeral Mass. (These may be deacons if desired.)

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_

5 \_\_\_\_\_ 6 \_\_\_\_\_

**SUGGESTED FUNERAL MUSIC SELECTION:** Please make suggestions for hymns that could be included at the Funeral Mass. N.B. Songs that are secular in nature will not be played in Church.

Hymns: Entrance Hymn \_\_\_\_\_

Hymn for Preparation of Gifts \_\_\_\_\_

Responsorial Psalm Hymn \_\_\_\_\_

Communion Hymn: \_\_\_\_\_

Song of Farewell: \_\_\_\_\_

Recessional Hymn \_\_\_\_\_

National Anthem \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

### **FINAL COMMITTAL**

*It is expected that a deacon, a member of the clergy who represents the Church, will celebrate the Order of Christian Funeral as the Church has intended. Therefore, while cremation is an option for all Catholics, the Church places a very deliberate priority on the traditional burial of the body in imitation of burial of Jesus himself. If cremation has been chosen as the manner in which the deacon's body will be disposed, the Diocese has two expectations with regard to this choice; first, cremation is to take place after the Vigil and Funeral Mass with the Body (not the ashes) present. Secondly, the ashes are to be buried in a grave accompanied by the Rite of Committal.*

NAME OF CEMETERY: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PRESIDER: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please indicate a priest or deacon whom you would like to preside at the Rite of Committal at the cemetery.*

Deacon's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Director of the Diaconate \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

*This form is to be updated every five years and kept on file in the  
Office of the Diaconate*

*Once this form has been approved and placed on file with the Director of the Diaconate,  
a copy is to be forwarded to the Chosen Funeral Director*

August 2012