

# **Policy Manual for the Formation, Life, and Ministry of the Permanent Diaconate in the Diocese of Jackson, MS**

## **PART I – FORMATION, LIFE, MINISTRY**

### **1.0 – General**

#### **1.1 Purpose and Effectiveness**

The Second Vatican Council re-established the permanent diaconate as an order in its own right, returning to the early Church's practice. Each Episcopal Conference is empowered to determine whether the permanent diaconate is to be restored within its nation, but it remains to each individual diocesan bishop to determine whether or not to institute and maintain the permanent diaconate within his diocese. On June 4, 2016, Bishop Joseph Kopacz ordained the first permanent deacons of the Jackson Diocese in over thirty-five years.

This Manual is an attempt to integrate, coordinate and update the particular policies and laws governing the processes for application, selection, formation, ordination and the day-to-day administration of permanent deacons in the Diocese of Jackson in accordance with the requirements of the following: Canon Law, the *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons (Basic Norms)* issued jointly by the Congregation For Catholic Education/Congregation For The Clergy in 1998, and the *National Directory for the Formation, Life and Ministry of Permanent Deacons in the United States (National Directory)* promulgated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) on December 26, 2004.

The *Policy Manual for the Formation, Life, and Ministry of the Permanent Diaconate in the Diocese of Jackson, MS* is promulgated on this the feast of St. Vincent of Saragossa, Deacon and Martyr, the 22 January 2020 by Bishop Joseph R. Kopacz, Bishop of the Diocese of Jackson, and shall become effective in 30 days. All deacons, pastors, ministry coordinators, administrators, and others affected by or involved with the permanent diaconate shall ensure that all practices not in compliance with the provisions of this manual are suitably amended and implemented.

Any exceptions to the policies and directives in this Manual are reserved to the Bishop of Jackson.

#### **1.2 Perspectives on the Permanent Diaconate and its Management**

“By divine institution, among Christ’s faithful there are in the Church sacred ministers, who in law are also called clerics; the others are called lay people” [c. 207 §1]. Clergy are called “sacred ministers.” One becomes a “sacred minister” by receiving the sacrament of orders [c. 1008], which are the episcopate, the presbyterate, and the diaconate [c.1009]. Each according to his own grade fulfils, in the person of Christ the head, the offices of teaching, sanctifying and ruling [c. 1008], and is respected as a sacred minister of the Church.

Vatican II, in its “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church,” states: “At a lower level of the hierarchy are to be found deacons, who receive the imposition of hands ‘not unto the priesthood, but unto the ministry.’ For, strengthened by sacramental grace they are dedicated to the People of God, in conjunction with the bishop and his body of priests, in the service of the liturgy, of the Gospel and of works of charity. It pertains to the office of a deacon, in so far as it may be assigned to him by the competent authority, to administer Baptism solemnly to those whose Confirmation does not immediately follow; to be custodian and distributor of the Eucharist, in the name of the Church, to assist at and to bless marriages, to bring Viaticum to the dying; to read the sacred scripture to the faithful, to instruct and to exhort the people, to preside over

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the worship and over the prayer of the faithful, to administer sacramentals, and to officiate at funeral and burial services. Dedicated to works of charity and functions of administration, deacons should recall the admonition of St. Polycarp: *Let them be merciful, and zealous, and let them walk according to the truth of the Lord, who became the servant of all*... it will be possible to confer this diaconal order even upon married men, provided they be of more mature age, and also on suitable young men, for whom, however, the law of celibacy must remain in force.”

### **1.3 The Permanent Deacon and His Family**

The permanent deacons in the Diocese of Jackson are typical of permanent deacons elsewhere – they are mostly well-educated men with years of experience in the family, workplace, and Church environments. They include engineers, scientists, businessmen, high school teachers, administrators, managers, factory workers, first responders, healthcare professionals, skilled tradesmen, self-employed, and others. Most of them are fathers, some are grandfathers, and some are retired from the workforce. They have embraced ordination as a vocational call in a spirit of service to the People of God in the Diocese of Jackson.

Recognizing the need of permanent deacons to exercise ingenuity and flexibility in the implementation of their ministry of service, as well as the norms of canon and particular law, the policies and procedures in this Manual are intended to provide a sound formation and background against which permanent deacons can pursue their ministry as an integral part of the organization of the Church of Jackson.

The origin of the diaconate is the consecration and mission of Christ, in which the deacon is called to share. Whereas it is only the deacon himself who is ordained, and who is therefore subject to all the norms, requirements and responsibilities inherent in his ordination, the reality is that the vast majority of permanent deacons are also husbands and fathers. Inevitably, ordination will have an impact on the deacon’s family and its place in the community.

The degree of a deacon’s wife’s involvement in her husband’s ministry varies greatly from person to person; yet it is essential to the well-being of the family unit that all wives be kept informed of their husbands’ activities in order to arrive at an harmonious balance between family, professional and ecclesial responsibilities. Although true of all Christian families, the families of married deacons are called in a special way to participate actively and responsibly in the Church’s mission in the contemporary world.

In these circumstances, nothing in the provisions of this Manual is intended to govern or control the role and/or ministry of wives of permanent deacons, other than to ensure that they are kept informed of their husbands’ commitments, and of their own opportunities to participate in events of the diaconal program.

The single permanent deacon is similar in every respect, to a married permanent deacon, except that he is not married. The law of celibacy remains in force [c. 277].

The precept of the canon stating *“Those who are in sacred orders invalidly attempt marriage”* [c. 1087] is generally applicable, including the provision that contemplates the possibility of married permanent deacons who are widowed after ordination, to petition for a dispensation from this impediment if any single one of the following conditions is present: (1) the great and proven usefulness of the ministry of the deacon to the diocese to which he belongs, (2) that he has children of such a tender age as to be in need of motherly care, (3) that he has parents or parents-in-law who are elderly and in need of care [Circular Letter from the *“Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments”*, N. 263/97, of 6 June, 1997].

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## **1.4 The Permanent Deacon's Priorities**

It is a given that the permanent deacon's most essential commitment is to God, but his first priority must always be his wife and family. In order to provide for the needs of his family, the permanent deacon's second priority must be his job, career, or other source of income. Consequently, diaconal service and ministry can only occupy third priority in a permanent deacon's life.

All of the Diocesan policies and directives concerning the permanent diaconate, including those in this Manual, must be interpreted and applied against the background of this underlying set of essential priorities.

## **1.5 Diocesan Organization**

The Director of the Permanent Diaconate is directly responsible and accountable to the Bishop of Jackson. However, the Bishop may designate the Vicar General as the administrative liaison between the Diaconate and Office of the Bishop. The administrator of the Diaconate is its Director:

- Director, Permanent Diaconate, (Deacon John T. McGregor)

The Director is appointed by the Bishop and will ordinarily be a permanent deacon but may also be a priest. Furthermore, the Director shall consult on a regular basis with the Diaconate Community to obtain its input and/or assistance on appropriate matters. Such matters can be the planning of annual retreats, continuing education, liturgical proficiency, training of Masters of Ceremony, and others matters applicable to the Diaconal Ministry.

### **1.5.1 The Diaconate Director is responsible for:**

- Dissemination of information about the diaconate to the diocesan congregation.
- Soliciting diaconal vocations.
- Selection process of applicants for Diaconate Formation.
- Pre-ordination formation classes and retreats (Aspirancy & Candidacy – a four-year program).
- Post-ordination formation (a three-year program).
- Ongoing formation (CEU) of deacons.
- Assignments and personnel actions (submission of recommendations to the Office of Clergy Personnel and the bishop).
- Communication with the diaconate community.
- Diaconal community building events and activities.
- Coordination of diaconal matters with pastors and the diocesan staff.
- Budget development and management.

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## **2.0 – DEACON: The Man**

### **2.1 General**

Pursuant to the requirements of the 1983 Code of Canon Law, in order for one to be ordained to the permanent diaconate, he must be a Catholic man who is recognized and acknowledged as a person of faith. He must have tried to live a good Christian life exhibiting prudence, moral integrity and steadfastness in his commitments. Additionally, he will have been active in pastoral service for some time, exhibiting constancy, zeal, leadership and maturity.

A successful applicant is a man who enjoys helping others, is a team player who enhances the qualities of the people in his group, is accommodating, knows how to relate to others, likes people, gives high priority to family values, and is sensitive to the feelings of others. Above all, he is a man willing and desirous of following in the footsteps of Jesus, who came to serve, not to be served.

### **2.2 Age**

In accord with Canon Law, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has established the minimum age for ordination to the permanent diaconate at thirty-five for all candidates, married or Celibate (*National Directory*, 87). The maximum age for ordination in the Diocese of Jackson is left to the discretion of the Bishop, in each case.

### **2.3 Family Status/Parish Ministry**

A married man must have the full and freely given consent of his wife, in writing, in order to be accepted as a candidate to the permanent diaconate. Ordinarily, the man will be fully involved in some ministry within his parish, integrated into parish life and have the recommendation of his pastor.

### **2.4 Education**

To ensure his ability to fully participate and develop within the formation program, an applicant will be expected to have completed at least two years of university education, or its equivalent. Work experience, technical or career-oriented courses may often serve to qualify for this purpose

### **2.5 Financial Stability**

In order to be accepted into the formation program, and eventual ordination to the Order of Deacon, an applicant must be able to adequately support his family, including all dependents, financially through his lay profession or employment. This allows him to offer his services gratuitously and discharges the Diocese from assuming any financial responsibility on his behalf, or on behalf of his family and dependents. Further, he must have a sufficient pension to maintain that same situation after his retirement from his lay profession or employment.

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## **2.6 Health**

Each applicant must be in good general health, free of any chronic condition that may interfere with, or be aggravated by his participation in the formation program and/or ministry. The health status of his wife or dependents may also be considered to assure that the responsibilities of ministry do not negatively impact family life.

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## **3.0 – The Application Process**

### **3.1 General**

Applications from all interested qualified men are encouraged when new formation classes are published. Announcements to that effect are to be made a minimum of three months prior to beginning the selection process through the Diocesan Website, articles in the *Mississippi Catholic*, letters to deacons and pastors in the Diocese, and announcements in parishes and church bulletins.

All interested men and their wives are invited to attend Information Sessions held in locations throughout the Diocese convenient to all Deaneries. Attendance to these sessions is mandatory for the man and wife. At each session, the permanent diaconate is introduced from a historical, diocesan and experiential viewpoint, by diocesan staff assisted by deacon couples and, if possible, couples currently in formation. After attending the required session(s), any man interested in applying must submit a formal letter to the Director of the Diaconate requesting an application.

### **3.2 Freedom From Impediments**

Canon Law states a number of impediments to ordination to the diaconate. To ensure that any applicant is not impeded from ordination, a partial list of possible impediments is included in the application (nos. 48-54). If an applicant answers “yes” or “unsure” to any of these questions, he will be required to provide a detailed explanation on a separate sheet and submit it with his application.

### **3.3 Application**

A formal “*Permanent Diaconate Application for the Diocese of Jackson,*” is forwarded to the applicant upon receipt of a letter of request. The applicant is requested to provide the names of references that will be contacted and asked to provide answers to a detailed questionnaire. The applicant is also advised that a reference will be sought from his pastor, and that his wife will be asked to comment on his application and confirm that she is in full agreement with it. The applicant is advised that his application will not be complete, and thus will not be considered, unless all documents are received in a timely manner. These documents consist of, but not limited to, his completed application, five lay references, pastor’s reference, Permission for Background Check, wife’s consent, Baptism/Confirmation Certification, and a Certification of valid Catholic Marriage. The application is then returned to the applicant’s pastor, so that he can complete the *Pastor’s Questionnaire* and enclose a letter of recommendation. The pastor is then to forward the completed application to the Office of the Permanent Diaconate.

In the event that any one or more of these documents is not received prior to the time prescribed by the Director of the Diaconate, the applicant will be advised that his application is incomplete and will not be considered.

The applicant is also advised that he will be contacted to arrange for required interviews.

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### **3.4 Wife's Consent**

To ensure complete freedom, the wife is asked to comment on her husband's application to the permanent diaconate and indicate her support and consent to it, if she so wishes.

Obviously, this step is omitted in the case of single applicants.

### **3.5 References**

The "*Pastor's Questionnaire*" is also a part of the application.

No application will be considered until and unless these documents are received by the Director of the Diaconate.

### **3.6 Interviews**

Integral to the application process are the interviews with the applicant and his wife.

The required interviews are: 1) Deacon Perceiver [man only] 2) Interview by a Deacon Couple 3) Presbyterate interview [man only] 4) Deacon Board interview of applicant [man only] 5) and at the option of the Bishop an interview with the applicant couple.

Results of these interviews provide an insight into the applicant's personal traits to assist in determining if he has the inherent qualities that are typical of a good deacon. Moreover, these interviews are intended to provide a personal insight into the couple's relationship to each other, their family and life-style.

### **3.7 Documentation**

Each applicant is required to produce all of the documents stipulated on the *Application Process Checklist*.

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## **4.0 – The Selection Process**

### **4.1 The Selection Committee**

It is the role of the *Deacon Board* to review the applications for entry into the formation program submitted by the Director of the Diaconate and make recommendations to the Bishop on the suitability of each applicant. The *Deacon Board* is currently composed of the following:

- a) The Director of the Diaconate
- b) One Deacon
- c) One Deacon Wife
- d) One Priest
- e) Two Laypersons

With the exception of the Director, the Deacon Board members are appointed and are subject to reappointment, by the Bishop on the recommendation of the Diaconate Director. The structure of the Board is subject to revision by the Bishop.

Upon adequate notification by the Diaconate Director, the Deacon Board will meet to review, discuss, and consider new applications. The Deacon Board will review all the information submitted by and pertinent to each applicant, including the inputs from the references and the results of the interviews, and determine if the applicant should be asked to appear for a final interview by the Deacon Board. The Deacon Board will ensure that each candidate meets the minimum qualifications established by the Diocese and that all the required documentation have been submitted.

After such, a final interview before the Deacon Board and the bishop with the applicant (man only) is conducted to determine if the man's application is to be accepted. The Board may recommend rejection of the application, recommend acceptance, or recommend acceptance subject to specific provisions under special condition(s); however, the ultimate decision rests with the bishop.

In all of its deliberations, the Deacon Board will be guided by the cardinal principle of bias towards the well-being of the community of the Diocese, rather than the needs or requirements of any individual applicant. The cardinal principal is always in favor of the Church.

### **4.2 Review by the Bishop**

If the bishop is not present during the interview with the Deacon Board, a written summary of the *Deacon Board's* decisions and recommendations will be prepared by the Director of the Diaconate, signed by all members, and submitted to the bishop for his approval. Only those recommendations specifically approved by the Bishop will be implemented.

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### **4.3 Notification of Applicants**

After the Bishop concurs with or modifies the recommendations of the Deacon Board, the applicants will be advised in writing of the status of their applications. Those applicants who have been accepted will be given details of the formation schedule and expectations.

The letter of acceptance will make it clear that acceptance into the formation program is not a guarantee of eventual ordination to the diaconate; acceptance simply initiates a five-year period of discernment during which either party is free to request withdrawal from the program.

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## **5.0 – The Formation Process**

### **5.1 A Period of Mutual Discernment**

Acceptance into the formation program is the beginning of a period of mutual discernment during which each candidate is encouraged to continue to evaluate his call to the diaconate. At the same time, the candidate's performance within the formation program, his response and attitude will continue to be evaluated by the Director of Formation, detailing the progress of each candidate to the Director of the Diaconate.

Thus, acceptance into the formation program is not a guarantee of eventual ordination to the diaconate. During that period a candidate may voluntarily withdraw from the program, or he may be asked to withdraw by the Director of the Diaconate upon concurrence of the Bishop.

### **5.2 Duration and Structure**

The Diocesan program is a cooperative effort between the Diocese of Jackson and Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama. It is intended to reflect the parameters established in the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States* as mandated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Thus, the program has been designed to provide approximately 700-1000 hours of classroom lectures, practicum, seminars, retreats, and field training spread over a period of four years of formation.

Recognizing that the “element which most characterizes diaconal spirituality is the discovery of and sharing in the love of Christ the servant, who came not to be served but to serve,” as an integral part of their formation each candidate is introduced into the pastoral activities and ministries of the Diocese, and given the opportunity to actively participate in them.

The formation curriculum includes elements of Scripture studies, fundamental theology, the Church's commitment to social justice, homiletics, and liturgical practice. The specific curriculum is subject to change in order to ensure continued and improved adherence to the “*Basic Norms*.”

### **5.3 Schedule**

During each of the four years of formation, formal lectures and seminars run from the month of September to the month of the following June. During the first year, or Aspirancy Year, sessions will be held on Saturday after the first Friday of the month from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM at a predetermined site. The academic, or Candidacy Period, years 2-5, sessions are held beginning at 6:45 pm on the first Friday of each month and conclude on Sunday afternoon.

A directed retreat for candidates and wives will take place at the conclusion of each year.

Starting with their second year, and continuing through the remainder of their formation, all candidates are directed to participate in diocesan ministries, with appropriate guidance and supervision.

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## **5.4 Wives' Participation**

To ensure that wives of married candidates grow in awareness of their husbands' vocation, and the potential impact of the ministry on the family and on their marital relations, wives are strongly encouraged to attend and actively participate in all aspects of the formation program. Wives are also invited to active participation in ministry to assist them in developing their own awareness of mission at their husbands' side.

## **5.5 Priorities and Attendance**

Candidates are to understand that acceptance into the formation program entails a commitment on their part to give priority to the formation program over any other ministries in which they might be involved. Attendance at all sessions is mandatory, and unjustifiable absences will be considered as grounds to request that the candidate withdraw from the program.

## **5.6 Periodic Reviews**

The academic performance of each candidate is determined by the grades earned in the Master of Theological Studies program arranged through Spring Hill College. A final transcript of their grades will be placed in the personnel file of each participant, which is maintained by the Director of the Diaconate.

The Director of the Permanent Diaconate will interview each candidate at the end of each formation year. The results of these interviews, along with due consideration for the candidate's academic performance, pastoral practice, and commitment to spiritual formation will constitute approval of the candidate for advancement to the next year of formation

Other recommended actions may include:

- a) Placing the candidate on probation for specific reasons and recommending appropriate remedial action.
- b) Asking the candidate to withdraw.
- c) Simply acknowledging the candidate's continuing satisfactory development and recommend continuance in the program.
- d) When applicable, recommend the candidate be ordained to the Order of Deacon.

The recommended actions will be submitted to the Bishop through the Director of the Diaconate for his review and concurrence.

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## **6.0 – Minor Ministries Institution Process**

### **6.1 Timing**

In accordance with the requirements of *Canon Law*, candidates to the permanent diaconate are to be admitted to the ministries of Reader and Acolyte prior to elevation to the diaconate. A minimum of six months must elapse between the various institutions. In the Diocese of Jackson, institution to these ministries will take place at an appropriate time during the second and third year of their formation.

### **6.2 Ministry of Acolyte**

The ministry of Acolyte will be conferred at an appropriate time during the third year of formation on those candidates who have successfully completed the second year of formation and who have served as Reader for at least six months.

### **6.3 Ministry of Reader**

The ministry of Reader will be conferred at an appropriate time during the second year of formation on those candidates who have successfully completed the first year of formation and have been admitted to Candidacy for at least six months.

### **6.5 Certificates**

After institution, the Director of the Diaconate will confirm to the Chancellor the name of each candidate and the ministry to which he has been instituted. The Office of the Permanent Diaconate will also produce and forward to each candidate a certificate, duly signed by the Bishop and Chancellor attesting to the candidate's institution to the appropriate ministry.

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## **7.0 – Ordination Process**

The process described herein only applies to candidates from the Diocese of Jackson.

### **7.1 Candidacy**

During the month of August prior to the first year of his formation, each candidate desiring to be ordained shall address in his own hand a letter to the Bishop requesting inscription as a candidate to the Order of Deacon. The appropriate format for this letter is available from the Office of the Diaconate

The *Rite of Candidacy* for all applicants so approved, will be conducted during the Mass celebrated in September or October of that year.

### **7.2 Petition and Ordination**

Each duly inscribed candidate desiring to be ordained to the Order of Deacon, shall address in his own hand a letter of petition to the Bishop, during the month of March of the fourth year of his formation. The appropriate format for this letter is available from the Office of the Diaconate.

The Director of the Diaconate, upon recommendation of the *Deacon Board*, shall obtain the Bishop's written approval for all petitions, prior to the end of the month of April of that year.

The *Rite of Ordination* will normally be held in the month of June. Candidates to be ordained will be required to participate in a 5-day pre-ordination retreat prior to ordination in consultation with the Director of the Permanent Diaconate. Normally the Ordination Liturgy will be held in the Cathedral of Saint Peter the Apostle in Jackson. On occasion, the time and place of Ordination may be changed for practical and/or pastoral reasons.

Candidates' wives may take an active role during the Ordination, assisting their Pastor or another priest or deacon in vesting their husbands with the stole and dalmatic. (There is no provision in the Rite for wives to assist the vesting minister, so the nature of their participation shall be dictated by the Diocesan Liturgist).

Under certain circumstances, a candidate may elect to defer his ordination for personal reasons involving his family and/or employment situation. At the discretion of the Bishop, such requests and length of deferral shall be considered.

### **7.4 Documentation**

The Director of the Diaconate shall ensure that the personnel file for each candidate to be ordained is complete, and that all the required documentation has been received, especially the *Certificate of Baptism*, *Certificate of Marriage* and *Wife's Consent* form (if applicable), and letters of petition. In those extraordinary situations where a *Decree of Nullity* would be applicable, the Director shall assure its authenticity and inclusion in the file.

Each candidate shall also be required to complete and sign an "*Oath of Fidelity*," and a "*Profession of Faith*," which are attachments to the *Petition for Ordination* submitted to the Bishop.

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The Director of the Diaconate shall furnish to the Chancellor copies of the Certificates referred to above and any other documentation prescribed by the Chancellor, confirming the Bishop's approval of the ordination.

After ordination, the Office of the Permanent Diaconate shall provide each deacon with a copy of the *Certificate of Ordination*, signed by the Bishop and Chancellor.

Each deacon shall also be given a copy of the *Manual for Permanent Deacons.*"

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## **8.0 – Ministry Assignments**

### **8.1 General**

No permanent deacon may function as a deacon within the Diocese of Jackson without a formal letter of appointment to ministry approved by the Bishop.

The Director of Deacons will be responsible for recommending to the Bishop the appointment of permanent deacons. In making its recommendations, the Director of Deacons shall give consideration to the needs of parishes and other venues of ministry, as well as to the qualifications, family situation, employment situation, and geographic location of the individual deacon. Consideration should also be given to the likelihood of successful collaborative ministry between the individual deacon and his potential pastor or ministry coordinator.

### **8.2 Length of Appointment**

All appointments of permanent deacons shall be at the discretion of the diocesan bishop.

Clergy (including priests and deacons) are to be united with one another in the bond of brotherhood and prayer, and to strive for mutual cooperation [c. 275 §1]. Unless lawfully impeded, clergy are obligated to faithfully fulfill the duties entrusted to them by the Ordinary [c. 274 §2]. The pastor, whose office requires priestly ordination because it entails the full care of souls [c. 150], will be required to meet with the deacon as often as necessary, but at least semi-annually, to discuss any relevant issues. The deacon may also request such a meeting.

In the case of a ministry of service appointment (outside a liturgical base), the coordinator of the service will be required to meet with the deacon as often as necessary, but at least semi-annually, to discuss any relevant issues. The deacon may also request such a meeting.

The pastor, coordinator, or deacon may refer an unresolved issue to the Director of the Diaconate, verbally or in writing. The resolution may involve conciliation between all parties involved and/or a change of appointment. A deacon may request a change of appointment, with justification, at any time. All such issues and/or changes are to be approved by the Director of Deacons, ratified by the Clergy Personnel Board, and submitted to the Bishop for final approval.

### **8.3 Initial Assignment**

In the case of newly ordained deacons, it will be the responsibility of the Director of Deacons to review all pertinent factors and make appropriate recommendations to the Bishop for the placement of the new deacons.

### **8.4 Liturgical Functions**

Every permanent deacon shall be appointed to a parish or pastoral center where he may exercise the liturgical functions permitted by *Canon Law*. In cases where the deacon is appointed to a primary ministry of service, the parish or pastoral center where he exercises his liturgical functions shall be known as his

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“liturgical base”. In such instances, the Bishop will determine if the deacon will also be considered as a resource of the parish or pastoral center, or that his involvement with the liturgical base will be limited to liturgical functions.

When appointed to serve only in a liturgical base, the deacon will be available to assist in whatever services are required and agreed, over and above his liturgical functions.

### **8.4.1 Mass with Deacon (General Instruction of the Roman Missal)**

171. When he is present at the celebration of the Eucharist, a Deacon should exercise his ministry, wearing sacred vestments. In fact, the Deacon:

- a) assists the Priest and walks at his side;
- b) ministers at the altar, both as regards the chalice and the book;
- c) proclaims the Gospel and may, at the direction of the Priest Celebrant, give the Homily (cf. no. 66);
- d) guides the faithful people by giving appropriate instructions, and announces the intentions of the Universal Prayer;
- e) assists the Priest Celebrant in distributing Communion, and purifies and arranges the sacred vessels;
- f) carries out the duties of other ministers himself, if necessary, when none of them are present.

### **The Introductory Rites**

172. Carrying the Book of the Gospels slightly elevated, the Deacon precedes the Priest as he approaches the altar or else walks at the Priest’s side.

173. When he reaches the altar, if he is carrying the Book of the Gospels, he omits the sign of reverence and goes up to the altar. It is a praiseworthy practice for him to place the Book of the Gospels on the altar, after which, together with the Priest, he venerates the altar with a kiss.

If, however, he is not carrying the Book of the Gospels, he makes a profound bow to the altar with the Priest in the customary way and with him venerates the altar with a kiss.

Lastly, if incense is being used, he assists the Priest in putting some into the thurible and in incensing the cross and the altar.

174. Once the altar has been incensed, the Deacon goes to the chair together with the Priest and there stands at the Priest’s side and assists him as necessary.

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### **The Liturgy of the Word**

175. During the singing of the Alleluia or other chant, if incense is being used, the Deacon ministers to the Priest as he puts incense into the thurible. Then, bowing profoundly before the Priest, he asks for the blessing, saying in a low voice, “Your blessing, Father.” The Priest blesses him, saying, “May the Lord be in your heart...” the Deacon signs himself with the Sign of the Cross and replies, “Amen.” Having bowed to the altar, he then takes up the Book of the Gospels which was placed on it and proceeds to the ambo, carrying the book slightly elevated. He is preceded by a thurifer carrying a smoking thurible and by ministers with lighted candles. At the ambo the Deacon greets the people, with hands joined, saying, “The Lord be with you.” After this, at the words “A reading from the holy Gospel,” he signs with his thumb the book and then himself on his forehead, mouth, and breast. He incenses the book and proclaims the Gospel reading. When this is done, he acclaims, “The Gospel of the Lord,” and all reply, “Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.” He then venerates the book with a kiss, saying quietly the formula *Per evangelica dicta* (“Through the words of the Gospel”), and returns to the Priest’s side.

When the Deacon is assisting the Bishop, he carries the book to him to be kissed, or else kisses it himself, saying quietly the formula *Per evangelica dicta* (“Through the words of the Gospel”). In more solemn celebrations, if appropriate, the Bishop may impart a blessing to the people with the Book of the Gospels.

Lastly, the Deacon may carry the Book of the Gospels to the credence table or to another suitable and dignified place.

176. Moreover, if there is no other suitable reader present, the Deacon should proclaim the other readings as well.

177. After the introduction by the Priest, it is the Deacon himself who announces the intentions of the Universal Prayer, usually from the ambo.

### **The Liturgy of the Eucharist**

178. After the Universal Prayer, while the Priest remains at the chair, the Deacon prepares the altar, assisted by the acolyte, but it is the Deacon’s place to take care of the sacred vessels himself. He also assists the Priest in receiving the people’s gifts. After this, he hands the Priest the paten with the bread to be consecrated, pours wine and a little water into the chalice, saying quietly, *By the mystery of this water, etc.*, and after this presents the chalice to the Priest. He may also carry out the preparation of the chalice at the credence table. If incense is being used, the Deacon assists the Priest during the incensation of the offerings, the cross, and the altar; and after this the Deacon himself or the acolyte incenses the Priest and the people.

179. During the Eucharistic Prayer, the Deacon stands near the Priest, but slightly behind him, so that when necessary he may assist the Priest with the chalice or the Missal.

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From the epiclesis until the Priest shows the chalice, the Deacon usually remains kneeling. If several Deacons are present, one of them may place incense in the thurible for the Consecration and incense the host and the chalice at the elevation.

180. At the concluding doxology of the Eucharistic Prayer, the Deacon stands next to the Priest, and holds the chalice elevated while the Priest elevates the paten with the host, until the people have acclaimed, Amen.

181. After the Priest has said the prayer for the Rite of Peace and the greeting “The peace of the Lord be with you always” and the people have replied, “And with your spirit,” the Deacon, if appropriate, says the invitation to the Sign of Peace. With hands joined, he faces the people and says, “Let us offer each other the sign of peace.” Then he himself receives the Sign of Peace from the Priest and may offer it to those other ministers who are nearest to him.

182. After the Priest’s Communion, the Deacon receives Communion under both kinds from the Priest himself and then assists the Priest in distributing Communion to the people. If Communion is given under both kinds, the Deacon himself administers the chalice to the communicants; and, when the distribution is over, standing at the altar, he immediately and reverently consumes all of the Blood of Christ that remains, assisted, if the case requires, by other Deacons and Priests.

183. When the distribution of Communion is over, the Deacon returns to the altar with the Priest, collects the fragments, should any remain, and then carries the chalice and other sacred vessels to the credence table, where he purifies them and arranges them as usual, while the Priest returns to the chair. Nevertheless, it is also permitted to leave vessels needing to be purified on a corporal, suitably covered, on the credence table, and to purify them immediately after Mass, following the Dismissal of the people.

### **The Concluding Rites**

184. Once the Prayer after Communion has been said, the Deacon makes brief announcements to the people, if indeed any need to be made, unless the Priest prefers to do this himself.

185. If a Prayer over the People or a formula of Solemn Blessing is used, the Deacon says, “Bow down for the blessing.” After the Priest’s blessing, the Deacon, with hands joined and facing the people, dismisses the people, saying, “Ite, missa est (Go forth, the Mass is ended)” or other options given in the Roman Missal (¶144).

186. Then, together with the Priest, the Deacon venerates the altar with a kiss, makes a profound bow, and withdraws in a manner similar to the Entrance Procession.

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### **8.5 Letter of Appointment**

The appropriate letter of appointment for each deacon, accurately reflecting his current status in the Diocese, is issued by the Bishop through the Chancellor. Copies of such letters shall be provided to the deacon's pastor, Vicar General, Episcopal Vicars (if any), Vicar Forane, Office of the Permanent Diaconate, and Editor of the Mississippi Catholic.

### **8.6 Service Agreement**

At the beginning of an appointment, the pastor and/or ministry coordinator and the permanent deacon will establish the nature and extent of the deacon's involvement. Both the nature and extent of his involvement may vary over time, especially at the beginning, as he settles into his new environment.

It is recommended that the agreed nature and extent of the deacon's involvement will be reflected in a written agreement, defining such things as the deacon's areas of responsibility, approximate time that the deacon will devote to the ministry, frequency of preaching, budgets, allowable expenses, and leaves of absence. The agreement should be finalized within a reasonably short time from the effective date of the deacon's appointment; it is to be signed by both parties and updated as the need arises. A copy of the agreement and any subsequent amendment to it, will be filed with the Director of the Diaconate and, in the case of married deacons, the Director of the Diaconate will forward a copy of it to the deacon's spouse.

The purpose of the agreement is to establish a clear understanding of the permanent deacon's commitment and avoid misunderstandings that can occur in purely oral communication.

### **8.7 Leave of Absence**

Permanent deacons must live their diaconate as the true vocation that it is. They must therefore be sensitive to the impact of their decisions on the communities they serve. This applies to leaves of absence of all kinds, including vacation leave, sick leave, extended leave, and sabbaticals.

The permanent deacon must be conscientious in planning his leaves of absence so as to do justice to all his priorities, i.e., family, work, and community. The community must not be left in difficulty due to improper planning of vacations and other more extended leaves of absence. Whatever the circumstances, every effort must be made to minimize the impact on the community being served. Any serious problem that cannot be solved by the parties concerned should be referred to the Director of the Diaconate for resolution.

*"Clerics ... are not to be absent from their diocese for a considerable time, to be determined by particular law, without the at least presumed permission of their proper Ordinary"* [c. 283 §1]. A leave of absence in excess of one month but less than three months requires the approval of the Director of the Diaconate. Leaves in excess of three months requires the permission of the Bishop.

### **8.8 Vacation Leave**

Every permanent deacon is *"entitled to a due and sufficient period of vacation leave each year"* [c. 283 §2]. Normally each deacon may set his vacation leave to match the vacation periods established for his lay work or profession, or to meet his family's needs.

### **8.9 Extended Leave**

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### **8.10 Sick Leave**

The permanent deacon is required to inform the Pastor and the Director of the Diaconate of any leave due to illness. The Director may be able to help alleviate the difficulties caused by such leave.

### **8.11 Sabbatical**

After ten years of service in the Diocese, a permanent deacon may request a six to twelve month leave of absence (called a sabbatical), for spiritual renewal, continuing development, and personal assessment of the future direction of his vocation. He should define his objectives, goals, and plans for study, prayer, and reflection well in advance so as to obtain the maximum benefit from his sabbatical. This preparation may include consultation with his pastor and/or coordinator, his spiritual director, and the Director of the Diaconate.

The request for a sabbatical will include at least a summary description of the objectives and goals, as well as a detailed plan. The request will ordinarily be granted automatically, provided there are no serious negative impacts on the deacon and/or the community. Upon his return from a sabbatical, the deacon will provide the Director of the Diaconate with a summary report to inform him about what was accomplished.

The Director of the Diaconate shall ensure that the Bishop, or his designated authority, issues an appropriate letter confirming the status of a permanent deacon who is going on a sabbatical or an extended leave of absence.

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## 9.0 – Spiritual Growth

All “*Christ’s faithful have the right to follow their own form of spiritual life, provided it is in accord with Church teaching*” [c. 214]. Permanent deacons “*have a special obligation to seek holiness in their lives, because they are consecrated to God by a new title through the reception of orders, and are stewards of the mysteries of God in the service of His people*” [c. 276 §1]. They “*are earnestly invited to participate daily in the Eucharistic Sacrifice*” [c. 276 §2]. “*They are exhorted to engage regularly in mental prayer, to approach the sacrament of penance frequently, to honor the Virgin Mother of God with particular veneration, and to use other general and special means of holiness*” [c. 276 §2, 5°].

### 9.1 Liturgy of the Hours

As prescribed by Canon Law [c. 276 §2, 3°] and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), permanent deacons are obliged to pray the morning and evening prayers of the Liturgy of the Hours daily.

### 9.2 Annual Retreat

Permanent deacons “*are obliged to make spiritual retreats, in accordance with the provision of particular law*” [c. 276 §4, 1°]. Particular law in the Diocese of Jackson requires that each permanent deacon incardinated and/or holding appointments in the Diocese, is obliged to make an annual retreat.

Deacons in the Diocese of Jackson may participate in the Priest retreat, the Deacon/LEM retreat, the Deacon Candidate retreat, or may choose to make a retreat individually. The office of the Director of the Diaconate will organize the retreat in common, and all permanent deacons incardinated and/or holding appointments in the Diocese are expected to attend one of the diocesan organized retreats at least every other year.

The personal directed or guided retreat will be scheduled at the convenience of the individual deacon, and preferably should be selected with the guidance of his Spiritual Director, if he has one, and approved by the Director of the Diaconate. This type retreat can also be conducted for the entire community of deacons, providing an adequate location is secured.

The liturgical base is to pay for the retreat of each permanent deacon appointed to that base by the Bishop. In the case of retired deacons, the liturgical base is asked to pay the retreat costs providing the deacon still assists in liturgical celebrations at that parish. Otherwise, the retired deacon will assume the cost of his retreat. The retreat fee will be equal to that set for priests in the Priest Salary and Benefits appendix of the Priest Personnel Policy.

### 9.3 Spiritual Direction

*“Regular spiritual direction is truly of the greatest assistance to deacons. Experience clearly shows how much can be gained in sincere and humble dialogue with a wise spiritual director, not only in the resolution of doubts and problems which inevitably arise throughout life, but also in employing the necessary discernment to arrive at better self-knowledge and to grow in faithful fellowship with Christ”* [National Directory, 58]. Permanent deacons should therefore consider having a Spiritual Director, and meeting with him/her on a regular basis.

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## **9.4 Continuing Education**

### **9.4.1 General**

*The National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States* mandates ongoing continuing education and formation for deacons. “The intellectual dimension of diaconate formation does not end with ordination but is an ongoing requirement of the vocation” (248). A requirement for such education and formation is to be established by each diocese, with the approval of the Bishop.

### **9.4.2 Participation in Continuing Education and Formation**

The Diocese of Jackson has established the following Continuing Education and Formation requirements for all deacons in active service. (Note: Retired deacons, deacons on Pastoral Leave, deacons on Leave of Absence may be relieved of these requirements)

1. Each deacon is required to obtain sixty (60) hours of continuing education every three (3) years, with a minimum of twelve (12) hours in any year.
2. The three-year cycle begins January 1 following the year of ordination, or arrival into the diocese and the granting of faculties by the Bishop.
3. In each three-year cycle, at least thirty (30) of the sixty (60) hours must be in the form of attendance and participation in live seminars, courses, or workshops. The remaining thirty (30) hours can be any combination of live presentations, reading books, listening to tapes, using computer modules, or programs offered on-line.
4. The following programs qualify for continuing education hours:
  - a. Attendance and participation at the National Diaconate Institute for Continuing Education (NDICE) or National Association of Diaconate Directors (NADD) regional or national meetings.
  - b. Seminars, workshops and programs offered by Diocesan Agencies or Corporations.
  - c. Courses offered by colleges, seminaries, or universities designed specifically to further the education and/or formation of deacons.
  - d. Courses offered by colleges, seminaries, universities or other institutions subject to the approval of Deacon Director.
  - e. Books, tapes, computer modules, or on-line programs, subject to the approval of the Deacon Director.
  - f. Participation in anti-death penalty and/or right to life vigils, all subject to approval by the Deacon Director.
  - g. Participation in various Social Justice programs as prescribed by the Bishop.
5. Each deacon will report his continuing education courses and hours to the Director of the Diaconate, who will maintain these statistics.
6. In the event that a deacon in active service fails to fulfill the annual and/or three-year continuing education requirement, the Director of the Diaconate shall notify the Bishop, who, at his discretion, may determine if faculties and assignment be suspended until the requirements are fulfilled.
7. The Office of the Diaconate is not responsible for the reimbursement of funds expended by the deacon on continuing education. It is suggested that each deacon request assistance from his assigned liturgical base. However, the Office of the Diaconate shall actively seek and apply for all grants that will assist the diaconate in continuing education activities.

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8. Wives of deacons are not required to participate in continuing education. However, parishes, agencies and other special ministries should be very supportive of wives in ministry and allocate funds as much as possible.

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## **10.0 – Remuneration and Financial Responsibility**

### **10.1 Basic Principles**

*“Married deacons who dedicate themselves completely to the ecclesiastical ministry deserve a remuneration by which they can provide for their own support and that of their families; married deacons, however, who receive remuneration by reason of a civil profession which they exercise or have exercised are to take care of their own and to their families’ needs from the incomes derived from their profession”* [c. 281 §3]. A permanent deacon must therefore be able to provide adequate financial support for his family, including all dependents, through his lay profession or employment. This allows him to offer his services gratuitously, and discharges the Diocese from assuming any financial responsibility, including adequate insurance, on behalf of the deacon or his family and dependents. Further, the deacon should have sufficient income and/or pension to maintain that same situation after his retirement from his lay profession or employment.

### **10.2 Remuneration**

Permanent deacons, as such, will not ordinarily receive a salary or any other type of remuneration for their services from the Diocese of Jackson or any of its parishes. However, permanent deacons working full or part-time at an official function in the diocese or parish will receive a salary according to terms that apply to the position in the diocese or parish. A contract and job description will be required. Permanent deacons are entitled to the remuneration and all benefits associated with the position.

### **10.3 Stipends, Offerings of the Faithful, and Gifts**

The policies of the Diocese apply equally to permanent deacons and priests with regard to stipends/fees/offerings. With approval of the pastor, a deacon may retain stipends given to him personally. This includes fees/stipends/offerings given for marriages, funeral, Baptisms, blessings and any other fee/stipend/offering extended for Sacraments or blessings, unless specifically stated otherwise by the giver.

### **10.4 Reimbursement of Expenses**

*“Permanent deacons in full-time secular employment, as well as those in part-time ministries, are to be reimbursed for legitimate expenses incurred in their ministry”* [National Directory §96]. Generally speaking, it will remain the responsibility of the deacon incurring such expenses to make suitable written claims and, where appropriate, submit pertinent receipts in accordance with existing agreement with his pastor. In cases where a deacon uses his own automobile in the performance of his ministries, he is entitled to recover expenses based on the distances involved.

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### **11.0 – Public Office**

Pursuant to Canon 288, permanent deacons are not bound by the prescriptions of Canon 284, Canon 285 §3 and §4, Canon 286, and Canon 287 §2, regarding occupations foreign to the clerical state, such as public office, administration of property belonging to the laity, positions requiring accountability, business and trade, and participation in partisan politics, and acting as officials in labor unions, unless particular law determines otherwise.

However, before seeking or accepting such offices or participating in such activities, a permanent deacon is required to consult the Director of the Diaconate.

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## **12.0 – Title and Dress**

### **12.1 Title and Form of Address**

Permanent deacons in the Diocese of Jackson will be called “*Deacon ...*” and will ordinarily be addressed in the same manner. They should be consistent in expecting the general laity within the Church community to ordinarily address them as “*Deacon ...*”.- The use of “*Reverend Mr. ...*” is ordinarily applicable only to transitional deacons.

### **12.2 Ecclesiastical Dress**

The ordinary dress for deacons is the same as the lay faithful. However, the deacon may wear clerical dress when ministering to the People of God where pastoral circumstances indicates need. The circumstances include, but are not limited to church functions, visitations in hospitals, prisons/jails, hospices, nursing homes, aboard ship, and some catechetical situations. A pendant pectoral cross should not be worn with clerical dress. In the Diocese of Jackson, permanent deacons have chosen to wear gray clerical shirt with Roman collar to differentiate themselves from diocesan priests.

### **12.3 Liturgical Vestments**

The dalmatic, worn over the alb and stole, are the vestments proper to the deacon.

When assisting or presiding at liturgical ceremonies, deacons will dress according to the requirements of liturgical law for the various rites.

Normally each deacon is expected to provide his own alb and cincture, as well as stoles in the appropriate liturgical colors. Where this presents a financial difficulty, a permanent deacon may request assistance from his liturgical base towards acquiring the necessary vestments. It is encouraged that matching chasubles/dalmatics be provided by the liturgical base where financially possible.

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## **13.0 – Transfers, Incardination and Excardination**

### **13.1 Transfers into the Diocese**

Any permanent deacon ordained outside the Diocese and taking up residence within the Diocese will be required to contact the Bishop and/or the Director of the Diaconate, and satisfy the following requirements before he can be considered for appointment to ministry within the Diocese of Jackson.

- a) If the deacon was ordained in the United States, he is to provide a letter from his current (Arch) Diocesan Bishop, acknowledging the deacon's move into the Diocese of Jackson, supporting his previous diaconal ministry, and recommending continuance of his diaconal ministry in the Diocese of Jackson.
- b) The deacon will have established a permanent residence within the Diocese of Jackson, and have resided there for a period of six consecutive months.
- c) The deacon will be gainfully employed or retired from a full-time occupation that provides suitable income for the support of his family, and will have been engaged in or retired from such occupation for a period of no less than six months.
- d) If the deacon was ordained outside of the United States, in addition to meeting the above requirements the ordaining (Arch) Diocese will be invited to provide a *"Request for Faculties"* on behalf of the deacon.

Once all the proper documentation is received, the newly arrived Deacon will be interviewed by the Director of the Diaconate, who will make a recommendation to the Bishop for an appointment. The newly assigned Deacon will be subject to all the policies and guidelines generally applicable to permanent deacons in the Diocese of Jackson.

After residing in the Diocese for five years, the deacon may request incardination, if he has not already done so.

### **13.2 Transfer Out of the Diocese**

Any deacon ordained and incardinated in the Diocese of Jackson and moving elsewhere, will be required to advise the Director of the Diaconate, and to maintain with him all current data regarding his ministry, location and address.

The Director will arrange to provide the deacon with a letter of introduction to his new (Arch) Diocese, provide any documents requested by the new diocese, and will ensure that ongoing dialogue is maintained with the deacon at his new location.

After five years have elapsed, the Director of the Diaconate will contact the deacon and inquire as to his intentions to return to the Diocese of Jackson. If there is an indication of intent to return to the Diocese, a further inquiry will be made at the end of three more years, if the deacon has not returned prior to that date.

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If the deacon indicates that he does not intend to return to the Diocese, or after not more than ten years have elapsed since his departure, the deacon will be advised to seek excardination and incardination into his new (Arch) Diocese. If no action is taken towards this end, the deacon's faculties granted in the Diocese of Jackson will be suspended, and the deacon and the Ordinary of the (Arch) Diocese in which he resides will be so advised.

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## **14.0 – Retirement**

In keeping with the usual conditions applicable to clergy, upon reaching his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, every permanent deacon shall be required to offer his resignation from active ministry to the Bishop of Jackson.

The Bishop may also accept the resignation of a permanent deacon at other times, when so requested by the deacon for valid personal reasons.

When the retiring deacon's resignation is accepted, a permanent deacon's faculties will remain valid. However, written permission from the Bishop is required for the faculties to be exercised. Upon retirement, a deacon may petition the Bishop in writing for continuation of the exercise of his faculties, thus allowing him to assist and/or preside at liturgical functions on an occasional basis subject to the discretion of the pastor of his liturgical base.

A retired deacon may continue to participate in annual retreats and diaconal study weekends/sessions. His liturgical base is encouraged to continue assuming the costs of such activities.

Upon the granting of any permanent deacon's request for retirement, a copy of the Bishop's letter will be submitted to the Chancellor.

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## 15.0 – Deacon’s Funerals

### 15.1 General

In general, the norms governing a deacon’s funeral are those found in the liturgical books as well as those in any particular law of the Diocese regarding clergy.

The wishes of any deceased deacon or of the deacon’s family are to take priority in any arrangements.

### 15.2 Wake and Funeral Arrangements

Consideration of the following might be helpful to the deceased deacon’s family, and to those concerned with the wake and funeral arrangements.

- a) The deceased deacon may be vested in alb and stole, (and dalmatic) or in secular clothes.
- b) The deceased deacon may be waked at the family home, the funeral home or the church where the funeral liturgy will be celebrated (Extended visitation in the church is not deemed appropriate in the Diocese of Jackson).
- c) The Community of Deacons, in consultation with the family, may organize a wake service on the evening prior to the funeral liturgy. It will also ensure that the specific wishes of the family are carried out regarding readings, readers, and homilist.
- d) For the funeral liturgy:
  - The Presider will normally be the Bishop; and the diocesan Office of Liturgy will assist in the Liturgy when the Bishop is present (*including making sure appropriate music is selected.*)
  - Pallbearers will be the choice of the family.
  - The selection of concelebrants, Deacon of the Mass, readers, etc. is to be done in consultation with the family and the pastor.
  - The family and the pastor of the church where the funeral will take place will establish the time.
  - Deacons attending the funeral of a deacon, a deacon’s spouse or a deacon’s widow, may vest in alb and white stole, if the family so desires, and will be coordinated by the Director of the Diaconate.
- e) All costs associated with the funeral and burial arrangements are to be covered by the deacon’s estate and/or insurance, etc.

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- f) When making funeral arrangements for a deacon's wife, the widow of a deacon, or other members of the diaconate community, the family should be aware that the Community of Deacons is ready to assist with any of the above arrangements where they are applicable.

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## **16.0 – Records**

**The deacon is encouraged to keep a portfolio, file or electronic documentation .** From the time of each deacon's ordination all pertinent documentation including all formal documents required by Canon Law, as well as all other formal documents, including notice of appointment, change of appointment, excardination and incardination, are to be issued and retained on file by the Director of the Diaconate.

Any required preliminary work leading to the preparation of these formal documents will be handled through the office of the Director.

Permanent Clergy Personnel Files for Deacons are kept by the Chancellor

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## **17.0 – Distribution and Amendments**

Copies of this Manual will be distributed at no charge to all permanent deacons incardinated and/or holding appointments in the Diocese of Jackson, all candidates in the Formation Program for the Permanent Diaconate, all Pastors of the Diocese, all ministry coordinators of permanent deacons, members of the Deacon Advisory Board, the Diocesan Clergy Personnel Board, Vicar General, Episcopal Vicar, and Chancellor.

Distribution to other parties will be at the discretion of the Director of the Diaconate.

It is intended that this manual will be kept current to reflect any changes in policies, procedures, staffing, or other matters that will affect the life and ministry of the permanent deacon incardinated and/or holding appointments in the Diocese of Jackson. To this end, amendments to the pertinent pages of the manual will be circulated not less frequently than once a year, at the beginning of January of each year or at other times as deemed necessary.

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