Diaconate Personnel Manual
Diocese of Bridgeport
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By the Grace of God and the Authority of the Apostolic See

Bishop of Bridgeport

DECREE

+ In the name of Our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Having in mind the pastoral care of the Diocese of Bridgeport and the role of Permanent Deacons in this ministry, and in accord with the norms issued by Pope Paul VI in his Apostolic Letter Ad Pascendum and the canons of the 1983 Code of Canon Law, I decree the promulgation of The Diaconate Personnel Manual for the Diocese of Bridgeport. The Manual will take effect on Wednesday, January 6, 2016.

Given at Bridgeport on the fifth day of January, in the Year of Our Lord 2016.

____________________________________
Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano
Bishop of Bridgeport

___________________________________
Reverend Robert Kinnally
Chancellor
I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Second Vatican Council

The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council established that the clerical major order of deacon should be restored as a permanent clerical state and that the order could be conferred on mature married men (35 years of age and older). A decision was also made that the individual Episcopal Conferences would need the permission of the Holy See before ordaining permanent Deacons.

At their Spring 1968 Conference, the Bishops of the United States petitioned the Holy See for authorization to restore the diaconate as a permanent order in the United States. On August 30, 1968, the Apostolic Delegate informed the Bishops of the United States that Blessed Pope Paul VI had granted their request.

B. Diocese of Bridgeport

Bishop Walter W. Curtis ordained the first class of permanent deacons for the Diocese of Bridgeport on February 25, 1978. Since then, over 120 men have been ordained for the diocese. While each of these men expresses his life of service in various ways, all deacons share a common purpose in their ministry. The deacon’s ministry is:

... to bring God’s Word to believer and unbeliever alike, to preside over public prayer, to baptize, to assist at marriages and officiate at them, to give viaticum to the dying, and to lead the rites of burial. Once he is consecrated by the laying on of hands... he will perform works of charity in the name of the Bishop. ... Furthermore [he will] faithfully pray the Liturgy of the Hours daily for the Church and for the whole world. ¹

Most permanent deacons have family responsibilities and earn their living in the secular world. It is important that the deacon seek order and balance in his life: being an ordained presence of Christ the Servant in the world, while ably performing his duties as spouse, father, son, neighbor, employer or employee. Such a balance can only be achieved with excellent communication between the deacon and his wife, the bishop, his pastor, and other collaborators in ministry.

This manual is intended to facilitate the desired balance described above by offering an explanation of the deacon’s responsibilities in and to the Diocese of Bridgeport and his assignment, the range of his freedoms to act, appropriate mutual expectations of the deacon and those in collaborative ministry, their individual and mutual rights, duties, and their anticipated and obligatory mutual fraternal support.

¹The Rites Book Volume II, Ordination of a Deacon, Paragraph 14
II. MINISTERIAL DUTIES OF THE DEACON

A. Vocation and Ministry of the Diaconate

In order to better understand the role and mission of a deacon in the life of the Church, one must begin with the Church’s teaching regarding the sacrament of Holy Orders that the deacon receives and shares. The Bishops of the United States, in their document The National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States (NDPD) (2003), describe the sacrament of Holy Orders in the following way:

Holy Orders is the sacrament through which the mission entrusted by Christ to his apostles and their successors continues to be exercised in the Church until the end of time. Thus, it is the sacrament of apostolic ministry: “The mission of the Apostles . . . is a true service, significantly referred to in Sacred Scripture as ‘diakonia,’ namely service or ministry.” This diakonia “is exercised on different levels by those who from antiquity have been called bishops, priests and deacons.”

As an integral part of the sacrament of Holy Orders, the conferral of the diaconate configures a man to Christ as Servant, constituting him as a member of the hierarchy and sacred minister of Christ with “a distinct identity and integrity in the Church that marks him as neither a lay person nor a priest; rather, the deacon is a cleric who is ordained to diakonia, namely, a service to God’s people in communion with the bishop and his body of priests.”

Thus, the divinely constituted structure of the Church requires the unique and irreplaceable ministry of bishops, priests, deacons and laity to work together for the building up of the community of faith. Each state of the Church contributes in a unique way to its divinely given mission.

The deacons of the church are the sacramental sign of Christ’s ministry of service on behalf of the Church and the world, serving the discipleship of God’s people. Through his witness and service, each deacon is called to be a living icon of Christ the servant, who “did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mt. 20:28 NAB).

In order to live his ministry well, the deacon should be formed by his spiritual participation in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. The deacon must never forget that he does not serve with his gifts and talents alone but through the power of Christ alive in and through his diaconal ministry. The deacon must desire to live the mystery of the foot-washing at the Last Supper, wherein Christ became the servant of all.

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2NDPD, 24
3NDPD, 29
Ministerial opportunities for the deacon whose identity is properly formed in Christ are many. As a close collaborator with his pastor and sharer in the mystery of Holy Orders, deacons and priests must minister together as brothers in every respect, to help God’s people to grow in greater love of Christ and a deeper personal sanctification in service to the world. Each deacon also enjoys a special bond of charity with his bishop, allowing the bishop to care for those most in need through each deacon’s ministry of charity and service.

Deacons are also called to create unity, working with and in their community, to build up the Kingdom of God in the world. Diaconal ministry also supports the laity’s participation in the apostolic mission of the church. This mission necessarily entails the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. The deacon does not fulfill his obligations by simply doing the work himself; rather he is to facilitate the participation of the people in this important enterprise of the Church. Deacons are called to live and foster “servant leadership” in every aspect of the Church’s life.

The deacon should also serve those people who live on the periphery of society, especially the poor and the infirm, the lost, the far away, the unwanted, the disenfranchised, those whom the culture considers invisible and the new lepers within societies.

The liturgical ministry of the deacon should be a reflection of what he does among the People of God outside of the liturgy.

**B. The Threefold Ministry of the Diaconate**

More specifically, deacons are called to live a threefold ministry in the following way:

**Ministry of Charity**

Deacons serve as Christ’s heralds of hope and love to the poor, disabled, needy, lonely, young, forgotten and outcast. Through their leadership, witness and service, deacons are to promote works of mercy, justice, reconciliation and peace. In this most important aspect of diaconal service, each deacon must strive to challenge fellow believers to address the social needs of the poor (both material and spiritual) and seek to meet such needs:

As an ordained participant in the Church’s ministry of charity and justice, the deacon assumes the duties entrusted to him by his Bishop with humility and enthusiasm. At the core of his spirituality, a deacon puts on Christ and is guided by the love of Christ in caring for all in his charge: “Charity is the very soul of ecclesial communion.”

In the prayer of diaconal ordination, the bishop implores God that the deacons may be “full of all the virtues, sincere in charity, solicitous towards the weak and the poor, humble in their service…[and] may…be the image of…"

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4NDPD, 84
your Son who did not come to be served but to serve...” Therefore, “by word and example,” the deacon places himself “at the constant service of [his] brothers and sisters.” This service will include diocesan and parochial works of charity, including the Church’s concern for social justice. It will also extend into Christian formation: working with youth and adults in promoting justice and life in all its phases and transforming the world through personal witness in conformity with the Gospel of life and justice. The deacon must strive, therefore, to serve all of humanity “without discrimination, while devoting particular care to the suffering and sinful.”

Ultimately, the deacon’s principal diakonia— a sign of the Church’s mission— “should bring [all whom he serves] to an experience of God’s love and move [them] to conversion by opening [their] heart[s] to the work of grace.”

Other works of charity may include prison ministry, nursing home ministry, helping in soup kitchens, hospital chaplaincy, visiting the homebound or working with immigrants. By virtue of their routine presence in the marketplace, deacons often have the opportunity to be resourceful and accessible in their service.

**Ministry of the Word**

The deacon is called to be a man of deep prayer, becoming familiar with and a living witness to the Word of God in his ministry, among his family and in the workplace. He is to love, preach and teach Sacred Scripture from the pulpit and in his daily life. A deacon is also called to teach and catechize his fellow Catholics and help prepare those seeking to receive the sacraments, most especially adults seeking entry into the Catholic family of faith.

In order to fulfill this ministry, the deacon must always remain a student of God’s Word, for only when the Word is deeply rooted in his own life can he bring that Word to others. The deacon ought to remember that since he is a member of the hierarchy, his actions and public pronouncements involve the Church and its Magisterium. Therefore, he is obligated to cherish the communion and mission that bind him to the Holy Father and his own bishop, especially in his preaching of the Scriptures, the Creed, Catholic teachings and the disciplines of the Church.

The ministry of preaching depends on the faculties given by the bishop.

The deacon may preach when he is the presiding minister of a sacrament or liturgical rite:

- Appropriate parts of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
- Baptism of Children
- Rite of Marriage
- Visitation and Communion of the Sick

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5NDPD, 85
• Funerals: at a Vigil Service or Rite of Christian Burial (apart from Mass) and in the Rite of Committal
• Communion Services
• Liturgy of the Hours
• Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament

The deacon may preach at the following liturgies and occasions:
• Celebration of the Eucharist with approval of the Pastor
• Celebration of a sacrament when he is not the presiding minister of that sacrament
• Retreats, days of recollection, missions, novenas, and the like
• Sermons, talks, homilies to be given at ecumenical gatherings or services

In those instances where a deacon may wish to be a minister of a liturgical celebration in a parish or institution other than his own (e.g., Marriage, Baptism, Funeral), he must first obtain the proper delegation or permission from the parish or institution where he will minister. This request is made to the appropriate pastor or chaplain.

Ministry of the Altar

Every deacon is called to serve the Sacrament of Christ’s Body and Blood by his proper participation at the Liturgy, his love and reverence for the Blessed Sacrament and his willingness to bring the Eucharist to those who are sick and unable to join the community of faith in Sunday worship. “After the priest, the deacon, in virtue of the sacred Ordination he has received, holds first place among those who minister in the celebration of the Eucharist. For the sacred Order of the Diaconate has been held in high honor in the Church even from the early times of the Apostles.”

By virtue of his ordination, a deacon may preside at a number of liturgical services including: baptizing infants, witnessing marriages, conducting wakes, presiding at funeral services outside of Mass, Communion Services, Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, and assisting at the Eucharist. Each deacon must also cultivate a profound love and reverence for the Sacrament of Christ’s Body and Blood. Such a Eucharistic spirituality is essential in the ministries described above. The deacon’s physical presence during the liturgy is a reminder that the deacon is available to serve the community.

Unity of Diaconal Service

The Church has always taught that the threefold ministry that marks the life and work of the diaconate forms a single whole whose parts can never be compromised or lost.

Therefore, diaconal ministries distinguished above are not to be separated; the Deacon is ordained for them all, and no one should be ordained who is

6Third Edition of the Roman Missal, Chapter III, #94
not prepared to undertake each in some way . . . the deacon may also have greater abilities in one aspect of ministry; therefore, his service may be marked by one of them more than the others. Fundamentally, however, there is an intrinsic unity in a deacon's ministry.\textsuperscript{7}

C. The Spirituality of Deacons

Introduction to the Spiritual Life

The primary sources of a deacon's spirituality are his participation in the sacraments of Christian initiation, as well as his sacramental identity and participation in ordained ministry. For a deacon who is married, his spirituality is nurtured further in the Sacrament of Matrimony, which sanctifies conjugal love and constitutes it as a sign of the love with which Christ gives himself to the Church. For the celibate deacon, loving God and serving his neighbor roots his whole person in a total and undivided consecration to Christ. For each deacon, his model \textit{par excellence} is Jesus Christ, the Servant, who lived totally at the service of his Father, for the good of every person to live their ministry to the fullest. Deacons must know Christ intimately so that he may shoulder the burdens of their ministry.\textsuperscript{8}

Deacons are obligated to give priority to the spiritual life and to live their \textit{diakonia} with generosity. They should integrate their family obligations, professional life, and ministerial responsibilities so as to grow in their commitment to the person and mission of Christ, the Servant. Clerics have a special obligation to seek holiness in their lives because they are consecrated to God by a new title in the reception of orders as dispensers of God's mysteries in the service of His people.\textsuperscript{9}

Spirituality in the Life of a Deacon

A deacon cultivates his spiritual life through private and communal prayer, attendance at daily Mass whenever possible, frequent reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and regular meetings with a spiritual director.

\textsuperscript{7}NDPD, 39
\textsuperscript{8}NDPD, 62
\textsuperscript{9}NDPD, 63
Daily Mass

Depending on his schedule, a deacon should participate in the daily reception of the Eucharist, which is the summit and source of his growth in holiness. Frequent reception of the Eucharist allows Christ to nourish the deacon as he serves the people of God.

Liturgy of the Hours

Each deacon is obliged to pray Morning and Evening Prayer. Daytime and Night Prayer while not obligatory should be incorporated into a deacon’s schedule when possible. The Liturgy of the Hours may be prayed privately or in community with others.

Personal Prayer

To attain an interior spiritual maturity requires an intense sacramental and prayer life. In addition to the daily recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours, personal prayer is to be part of a deacon’s daily experience and may include the rosary, reading Sacred Scripture and reading of private devotions. Please refer to the section on the Ongoing Formation Program for more information related to this topic.

Spiritual Direction

All deacons must be in frequent contact with a spiritual director who can be a guide on the journey to grow closer to the Lord.

Regular Confessor

All deacons are encouraged to have a confessor to whom they confess on a regular basis.

III. THE DiaCONATE WITHIN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

A. The Deacon and His Bishop

The deacon exercises his ministry within a specific pastoral context—the communion and mission of the diocesan Church. Ordained by his bishop, the deacon stands in a direct relationship with his diocesan bishop, in communion with whom and under whose authority he exercises his ministry. In making his promise of respect and obedience to his bishop the deacon takes as his model Christ, who became the servant of his Father. The bishop also enters into a relationship with the deacon since the deacon is his collaborator in the service of God’s people.10

10NDPD, 41
By virtue of his ordination, a deacon is canonically incardinated into a specific diocese, i.e. the Diocese of Bridgeport, and should consider him available to serve where the needs of the Diocese exist and as the bishop so discerns.

It is the bishop who assigns a deacon to a particular ministry. The principal criteria for this assignment are the pastoral needs of the diocese and local communities and the personal qualification and abilities of the deacon, as these have been discerned in his previous experience and in the course of his formation. The assignment should also take into account his family and occupational responsibilities.

It is very important that the particular ministry assigned to a deacon by his bishop be very clearly spelled out. It should always contain a clear delineation of responsibilities, that is, of the expectations of the diocese, of the particular community in and for which the deacon serves, and for the deacon himself. Such descriptions of ministerial responsibilities will help to prevent misunderstanding and disappointments arising among either the deacons themselves or other members of the Church.

The bishop is also responsible for supervising the ministerial life of deacons. He should, therefore, encourage and support them in their work, involve them in the committees and councils that assist him in the pastoral care of the diocese, promote their spiritual lives by providing spiritual counselors and continuing education programs for them.

**B. The Deacon and His Pastor**

Deacons exercise their distinct ministry in communion not only with the bishop, but also with priests. The priesthood and the diaconate are neither identical nor competitive but complementary ministries. “The diaconate is not an abridged form of the priesthood but a distinct and full order in its own right.”[11] Both priest and deacon should understand, then, that the diaconate is not to be thought of or exercised on the model of the priesthood. “Deacons and priests, as ordained ministers, should develop a genuine respect for each other, witnessing to the communion and mission they share with one another and with the bishop in mutual service to the people.”[12] Priesthood and diaconate are thus two distinct ministries for the good of the Church, and they must be exercised in communion with one another.

Deacons are to make every effort to assist and support their pastors. Deacons must always remember that they are to collaborate with their pastors, who are both the spiritual and administrative leader of the parish.

The priorities of family, employment, and ministry should be consistently reiterated and reinforced. A Deacon Ministerial Agreement, which is drawn up between the deacon and his pastor, and approved by the diocese, will help to define these priorities properly.

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11NDPD, 50
12NDPD, 52
C. The Deacon and the Laity

By virtue of their ordination, deacons become members of the clergy, with the rights and responsibilities that follow from that position. They are a unique instance of the clergy; since most of them are married, have secular careers, and do not engage in the Church’s ministry as their sole activity. This combination of an ordained ministry with marriage and secular occupation can be a great strength to their ministry and great opportunity for the Church as a whole. Deacons are uniquely qualified to represent the presence of the Church to the world and the needs and challenges of the world to the Church.13

Deacons, then, bridge the traditional divide between clergy and laity, between the sacred and the secular, by ministering in all of these areas. In enabling lay parishioners to exercise ministry, deacons fulfill a goal of the Second Vatican Council, which restored the diaconate as a permanent ministry, but also promoted the priesthood of all the faithful and gave new impetus to lay involvement in the work of the Church. The whole Church is a communion of ministries and services, and the deacon is in a unique position to foster and to integrate the variety of activities that this communion requires.

Although most deacons will give only part of their time to formal parish or diocesan diaconal ministries, they should not neglect the opportunities they have to exercise a public ministry in the world or in the marketplace. They do not cease to be deacons when they pursue their secular occupations, and there is much that they can do in the secular sphere precisely as deacons. The diaconate is a ministry through which the needs of the world are brought to the Church, and the gifts the Church has to offer are brought to the world. This mediating role can be made visible in powerful ways by the manner in which the deacon handles his secular career and his civic and public responsibilities. In turn, deacons should be able to bring to the Church the appreciation of the meaning and value of the Gospel that derives from their regular and deep involvement in the world, bearing as they do both the questions the world has to pose and the unique insights secular activity can provide.

D. The Deacon and the Diaconal Community

It is part of Holy Orders that a man is, by this sacrament, brought into the “ordo” or body of ordained ministers. A communal element is thus essential to ordination and to the exercise of ordained ministry. The mutual support and fraternity of deacons are not just sociologically or psychologically useful things; they are integral parts of the meaning of their vocation.

Therefore, deacons are encouraged to cultivate a sense of community among themselves and their families. As a community deacons should go to great lengths to attend diocesan functions, diaconal retreats, and funerals of their fellow deacons, wives, and family members.

13NDPD, 56
IV. ASSIGNMENT/REASSIGNMENT/RETIREMENT

A. Assignment to Ministry

General Norms

Deacons are ordained and incardinated for service in the diocese. The bishop makes all diaconal assignments for ministry in the diocese. Ordinarily, the bishop will seek some input from the Assignment Board, the Vicar General, the Director of the Diaconate and the pastor of each respective deacon and deacon candidate. The deacon is to accept willingly and in a Christian and professional manner whatever parish ministry the bishop assigns him.

The bishop may choose to give a deacon more than one assignment. However, no deacon will be assigned to multiple assignments without the opportunity to provide input to the Vicar General regarding the feasibility of fulfilling all that will be expected of him.

Whenever possible, it is suggested that the wife of the deacon register and worship at the parish where her husband is assigned and participate in the life of the parish as fully as her schedule and health will allow.

All assignments become official with a letter of appointment from the bishop.

Term of Assignment

All diaconal assignments, whether they are for newly ordained deacons or a change in assignment for presently ordained deacons, will be for a term of five (5) years. Terms can be renewed without limit. The duration of an assignment can also be extended or shortened at the sole discretion of the Bishop.

At the end of each term, a formal review will be made among the pastor, deacon and Vicar General before an additional five-year term is granted.

Ministerial Expectations

The deacon is expected to provide a minimum of 10 to 12 hours per week of parish and/or public ministry—depending on the deacon’s family and career situation—and his ministry schedule is to be discussed with the pastor at the beginning of each year. These hours do not include homily preparation time. Additionally, whenever possible, he should assist at a minimum of two parish Masses per weekend.

The deacon is ordinarily granted the faculty to preach upon ordination and should be allowed to preach at a minimum of two weekend Masses per month. If the situation warrants it, the deacon should be encouraged to preach more often. As an example, deacons should have the opportunity to preach at weekday Masses. The deacon should be scheduled in the rotation for the pre-baptismal classes and the baptisms of the parish.
The deacon’s hours of participation in parish ministry will vary and involve more hours at such times as Christmas, Holy Week, Easter and special parish celebrations such as Confirmation. The deacon should meet with his Pastor annually to discuss assignments and review his progress.

In order to assist the deacon in his assignment and to grow in his ministry, the pastor:

- Will release his deacon from ordinary parish responsibilities so that he can participate in an annual spiritual retreat and continuing education opportunities.
- Will recognize a deacon’s time for ministries beyond the parish to include prison and hospital/nursing home ministry, hospice, Cursillo, Engaged Encounter, etc.
- When possible, should provide or assist in the purchase of vestments required to carry out the liturgical role of the deacon.
- Should provide access to an area in which the work of instruction, counseling, study and preparation can be performed by the deacon.
- Will provide a monthly stipend to help the deacon defray the costs incurred in the exercise of his ministry. The amount of this monthly stipend will be determined by the bishop on an annual basis.
- Will allow a minimum of 4 weekends off per year as personal vacation time. Other needs for time off can be negotiated with the pastor.

**Wife & Family Participation**

Wives and children of deacons are called upon to sacrifice quality time with their husband and father for the good of Christ and the Church. Children of deacons should not be treated any differently from other children. The wives of deacons should not be expected to become any more involved in church activities than they wish. At the same time, the deacon must also remember that he is ordained to serve and should not take excessive vacation or undue time off. Family members as well as deacons themselves must keep in mind that they are all “public” figures in the parish.

**Procedure for the Assignment of Newly Ordained Deacons**

Ordinarily, after a candidate for diaconate is called to ordination, he will learn of his parish assignment directly from the bishop, either in a meeting with his wife or by letter. As part of the process of assigning the new deacon, the deacon and his wife also will meet with the Director of the Diaconate.

Newly ordained deacons should schedule a meeting with their newly assigned pastor as soon as possible after receiving their assignment letter to discuss ministry opportunities in the parish. Upon ordination, the deacon is granted all the rights stated in the *Code of Canon Law* and carries out all the duties assigned to him by his pastor.

The pastor will assign the deacon ministries in the parish according to its needs. However, the deacon should be active in the life of the parish and perceive other ways in which he
may bring his own gifts to parish life or public ministry, after consultation with the pastor.

**Appointment of Deacon Mentor**

All newly ordained deacons are assigned a deacon mentor. The role of the mentor will be one of assistance and guidance for the newly ordained as they enter into pastoral ministry as an ordained minister of the Church.

**B. Reassignment of a Deacon**

**Reassignment When Initiated by the Bishop**

Because deacons are ordained for ministry for the entire diocese, periodic transfers will occur. When considering the pastoral needs of the diocese's parishes, institutions and ministries, the bishop may transfer deacons in accord with those needs. Transfers also may be initiated by the pastor or the deacon himself at any time for good cause.

When the bishop, through the Vicar General, asks a deacon to transfer, the Vicar General will alert the current and new pastors of the change, and the deacon himself will interview with the new pastor.

**Reassignment When Initiated by the Deacon**

In order to initiate a transfer, a deacon must first consult with his wife and children about the change. He should then meet with the Vicar General, who will either propose a plan to remedy any difficulties that may be prompting the request for transfer or expedite the transfer. The deacon should inform his pastor of his plans and submit a formal request for transfer in a letter to the bishop. Deacons should bear in mind that a change of assignment to other parishes or ministries can enhance their personal growth and be a benefit to the Church. When transfers are made, among the factors to be considered are the needs of the Church, the location of the assignment, the skills and talents of the deacon, his family's needs and his availability.

**Reassignment When Initiated by the Deacon's Pastor**

If a pastor desires the transfer of a deacon, he will follow the same procedure as outlined in the section immediately above. After meeting with the Vicar General, followed by the deacon himself, the pastor will submit a formal request for the transfer of the deacon in a letter to the bishop.

**Resolution of Ministerial Disagreements**

If a serious conflict of any kind arises between the deacon and his pastor, the deacon must request a face-to-face discussion with his pastor. If the conflict is not resolved, the deacon must then contact the Director of the Diaconate to discuss the matter. The Director will then contact the pastor and attempt to resolve the issue. A meeting with the deacon, his
pastor and the director will follow. If necessary, the Vicar General will be consulted.

If the source of conflict cannot be resolved, then a transfer may be initiated either by the deacon or by the pastor, following the procedures outlined above.

Evidence of any wrongdoing by a priest, deacon or pastor should be reported immediately to the Vicar General.

C. Other Ministerial Assignments

Leave of Absence

For a serious cause, whether it is personal, spiritual or familial, a deacon may ask for a leave of absence from ministry for a determined period of time. Such a request must be discussed with the deacon’s pastor before any petition is submitted to the Bishop. If the deacon chooses to request a leave of absence, his petition must be made in writing to the bishop, who will ordinarily meet with the deacon and his wife to discuss the request. If granted, such a leave will be governed by the condition(s) that will be stated in a letter to be sent to the deacon by the bishop.

Ordinarily, when a deacon takes a leave of absence from ministry, he will return to his former assignment upon cessation of the leave. In special circumstances, the bishop or deacon may request that the deacon be given a new assignment upon his return.

Sabbatical

A deacon in good standing is eligible for a six-month period of leave from ministry after ten years of active ministry.

Any request for a sabbatical must be discussed in advance with his pastor, and be made in writing to the bishop, who will ordinarily meet with the deacon and his wife to discuss his request.

During his time on sabbatical, the deacon will not be eligible to receive the monthly stipend from his place of assignment.

Temporary/Permanent Service Outside of the Diocese

A formal request for transfer to a ministry outside the diocese must be made to the Vicar General with a copy sent to the Director of the Diaconate. The letter must include the reasons for his proposed departure from the diocese, a description of the ministry that is being sought and an indication of the duration of the proposed ministry. If the move is employment-related, the letter must include the reasons for the move, such as a promotion or change in employer (refer to Appendix D, pp. 43-44).
If the Bishop of Bridgeport grants the deacon approval to seek the proposed ministry outside of the diocese, the deacon must then ask permission of the diocesan bishop in his new diocese. Since faculties are not automatically transferred from one diocese to another, the deacon must receive the permission of the bishop of the new diocese before exercising faculties there.

Any deacon seeking a ministerial assignment outside of the Diocese of Bridgeport will be regarded as being on a temporary, “on-loan,” basis for five years before any excardination and incardination process can begin.

If a deacon has retired from active employment and he and his family are planning to relocate to a new diocese, he must write a letter to the bishop as outlined above. If the deacon is seeking incardination into the diocese into which he will be relocating, it is likely that the bishop will deny such requests for transfer until the deacon has served at least five years of ministry in his new diocese.

**Incardination Process**

A deacon who is in good standing in another diocese and seeks incardination into the Diocese of Bridgeport must submit a formal request for incardination to the Bishop of Bridgeport with a copy to the Office of Clergy. The specifics for the request must be stated in the letter. If the move is employment-related, the letter must include the reasons for the move. The arriving deacon must also ask permission of his current bishop to leave active ministry in his home diocese.

Before his petition for incardination can be processed, the deacon’s former diocese will be asked to provide a statement of suitability for ministry for the deacon. All safe environment requirements must also be met in full before the deacon’s petition can be acted upon.

Once approved for entry into the diocese, the arriving deacon will be granted an assignment(s) on a temporary, “on-loan” basis for five years before the excardination and incardination process can begin. *(refer to Appendix D, pp. 45, 46, 47)*

**Political Office**

“A deacon may not present his name for election to any public office or in any general election or accept a nomination or an appointment to public office, without the prior written permission of the diocesan bishop.”

“A deacon may not actively and publicly participate in another’s political campaign without the prior written permission of the diocesan bishop.”

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14NDPD, 91
15Ibid.
D. Other Ministerial Considerations

Deacon Ministerial Agreement

Every five years or when a new pastor is assigned to the parish, the deacon and pastor should draw up a “Deacon Ministerial Agreement.” This provides the pastor and deacon the opportunity to review and agree upon the deacon’s ministerial responsibilities. (Cf. Appendix B)

Proper Address

The appropriate written title for permanent deacons is “Deacon John Doe”. Deacons should be addressed as “Deacon.”

Clerical Identification

When a deacon’s clerical card has expired, he should request a new wallet card from the Office of Clergy Personnel.

Proper Dress for Ministerial Work

Deacons who possess the faculties of the Diocese of Bridgeport are permitted to wear clerical attire in the following ministerial situations: prison and hospital ministry. Clerical attire is to be a blue clerical shirt with Roman collar, black pants and black shoes.

Deacons serving as a Master of Ceremonies for the bishop will wear a cassock and surplice with Roman collar, black pants and black shoes.

Diocesan Email Address

Upon ordination, each deacon will be assigned a diocesan email address ending in .diobpt.org. This email address must be used to transmit and receive all official electronic diocesan correspondence. It is expected that each deacon regularly consult his email account to remain fully informed of diocesan-related matters.

Use of the Dalmatic

The proper vestment for a deacon at Mass is an alb (with an amice if required), cincture, stole worn in the diaconal manner, and dalmatic. The stole and dalmatic should be of the corresponding liturgical color.

With respect to its habitual use, the dalmatic is to the Deacon what the chasuble is to the Priest. Therefore, in most cases the deacon may use the dalmatic only when the priest would use the chasuble.
An exception to this rule is when a deacon accompanies a bishop or priest who wears a cope in a solemn celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours or for Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament.

There are no ritual situations in which a deacon would use the dalmatic on his own; it is only used when carrying out his functions accompanying a bishop or priest. Therefore, just as a priest would not use the chasuble for a Communion service, the deacon would not use a dalmatic. The same may be said of other celebrations of sacraments and sacramentals, such as funeral services outside of Mass.

The proper vestment for celebrations such as baptisms, weddings, funerals and the like outside of Mass is an alb and stole of the appropriate liturgical color.

E. Retirement

Normal Retirement

All permanent deacons are asked to submit a letter of resignation from their ministerial assignments to the bishop upon reaching their 75th birthday. Once a deacon retires, the obligatory monthly stipend will end. Pastors may elect to continue the stipend if the retired deacon continues to pursue a ministry schedule. A retired deacon in good standing will retain his diaconal faculties.

Early Retirement

A deacon may submit a written request to the bishop to retire prior to age seventy-five, after consulting with his pastor and the Vicar General. Additionally, any deacon who has not attained the age of seventy-five but whose ability to serve in active ministry has been permanently impaired because of ill health, other disability or personal reasons, may retire with the consent of the bishop. In either case, the deacon shall submit his written request for retirement directly to the bishop.

Effect of Retirement

Even though a deacon retires, he remains a deacon in the service of Christ and the Church. For this reason, he should continue to fulfill the spiritual obligations of his state in life. A retired deacon, and his wife, will always be welcome at all diaconate functions including the annual retreat. He remains a member of the Diaconal Community because he is an ordained cleric for life. He should also continue to be addressed as “Deacon”.

Whether the deacon has taken early or normal retirement he shall retain the faculties granted to him. As such, he is encouraged to continue to baptize, preach, assist in the Burial Rites of the Church and other ministries, with the permission of the pastor.

To witness a marriage, the retired deacon must be delegated for a specific marriage by the pastor of the parish where the marriage is to take place.
V. BENEFITS OFFERED TO DIOCESAN DEACONS

Monthly Stipend

Each deacon in active pastoral ministry will receive a monthly stipend from the place of his assignment. The amount of the monthly stipend will be determined by the bishop and communicated to the diaconal community and the pastors of the Diocese on an annual basis. For the 2016 pastoral year, the stipend will be $300 per month.

Monthly basic compensation is considered as reimbursement of un-itemized expenses, and must be reported on a 1099 form. Taxes may or may not be deducted, at the discretion of the deacon; social security should not be deducted. If a deacon does not wish to accept his monthly stipend, it should be either returned or donated to the parish.

Retreats

A deacon is required to make an annual retreat, for a minimum period of one weekend. Based on actual cost, a deacon is entitled to a maximum reimbursement of $250.00 each year from his place of assignment for retreat expenses, regardless of whether it is an individual retreat or a couples’ retreat. The deacon must submit a written request for the reimbursement indicating the location, if he attended alone or with his wife, and the total cost. Receipt or cancelled check is required.

Stipends & Gifts

Any free-will offering given to a deacon on the occasion of a ministerial service is to be retained by the deacon. However, any offerings intended for any other purpose (parish, charity, etc.) should be honored as such.

Christmas Bonus

The Christmas bonus for a deacon should be equal to his basic monthly stipend. The pastor is free to give the deacon a higher amount. The amount of a Christmas bonus for a deacon employed in a full-time or part-time salaried position for a parish or diocese should be determined by his pastor/supervisor.

Life Insurance

Each deacon is covered by a $10,000 life insurance policy. The deacon will receive a beneficiary card from the diocese, on which he must designate his choice of beneficiary of this policy. The diocese pays the premium for this coverage.
Burial Plot  (Catholic Cemeteries of the Diocese of Bridgeport)

Pursuant to the norms approved by Bishop William Lori in 2007, all deacons and their wives are eligible to choose from a number of special options regarding burial plots in the cemeteries operated by the Catholic Cemeteries of the Diocese of Bridgeport. For further information and assistance in choosing which option is best, each deacon is asked contact the Office of Catholic Cemeteries directly.

Full-Time Employment by Diocese or Parish

To avoid conflicts of interest, ordinarily a deacon will not be employed by the same parish where he is assigned for his diaconal ministry, except with the approval of the bishop.

A deacon who is a salaried employee of a parish or a diocesan agency (e.g., DRE, Parish Manager, instructor in diaconate formation) will have his income reported in the usual manner. If he is a full-time employee, he is entitled to a salary and health, dental, and pension benefits commensurate with the norms of that position. In addition, the deacon is also entitled to the basic monthly compensation from his place of assignment, since he is expected to continue his weekly ministry and liturgical service to his parish of assignment.

VI. LITURGICAL NORMS AND PROCEDURES

The Celebration of Baptism

Deacons are ordinary ministers of the Sacrament of Baptism. Baptizing is one of the faculties of the diocese for active deacons. However, this faculty is exercised only with the consent of the pastor of the parish where the baptism takes place. When the baptism takes place in a parish other than where a deacon is assigned he should check to see what is required.

Care must be taken to see that the baptism is correctly noted in the baptismal register of the parish where the sacrament is performed and that all names are spelled correctly.

The Celebration of Weddings

A deacon witnessing marriages within the diocese must currently have faculties from the diocese and must have the written delegation of the pastor of the parish within which the wedding will take place. Without this validation, the marriage will not only be illicit but invalid. Further, the couple to be married must present a marriage license issued by the appropriate civil authority, or a certification of marriage outside the Catholic Church.

Deacons from outside the diocese must have a letter of good standing sent to the pastor of the church where the wedding will take place. A deacon presiding at marriages outside the
diocese must call the Office of the Vicar General and obtain a letter of good standing that will be sent to the pastor where the wedding will take place.

**Participation at Mass with a Priest Celebrant**

When a deacon is present at the celebration of the Eucharist, a deacon should exercise his ministry, wearing an alb, stole of the appropriate liturgical color and a dalmatic (if available).

More specifically, the deacon:

- Assists the priest and walks at his side;
- Ministers at the altar, both as regards the chalice and the Roman Missal;
- Proclaims the Gospel and may, at the direction of the priest celebrant, preach;
- Leads the intentions of the Universal Prayer;
- Assists the priest celebrant in distributing Holy Communion;
- Purifies and arranges the sacred vessels;
- Carries out the duties of other ministers, if necessary, when none of them is present.

**Participation at Mass with a Bishop**

The deacon is to bring his own alb, cincture and stole. The stole should be the type that is worn under the dalmatic. At most liturgies celebrated by a bishop, the deacon wears a dalmatic (if at the Cathedral, the dalmatic is provided).

The deacon’s place in the entrance procession depends upon the particular liturgy, on how many deacons are assisting, and on whether or not the Book of the Gospels will be carried in procession:

- If there is only one deacon, and he is carrying the Book of the Gospels, he should be immediately behind the Cross and the candles.
- If there is only one deacon and he is not carrying the Book of the Gospels, he walks immediately in front of the Master of Ceremonies and before the bishop.
- If two deacons are assisting, the Deacon of the Word carries the Book of the Gospels as described above, and the Deacon of the Eucharist walks front of the Master of Ceremonies and before the bishop.

The deacon(s) sits immediately to the side of the bishop. If there is only one deacon, he sits immediately to the right of the bishop. During the Mass of Ordination, Confirmation, or other diocesan Masses, the bishop requires that at least two deacons assist.
**Liturgy of the Word**

After the second reading, the thurifer is brought to the bishop. The deacon takes the incense boat from the thurifer and holds it for the bishop while the bishop places incense into the censer. The Deacon of the Word then moves directly in front of the bishop and stands before him for the blessing. Having bowed to the altar, he then takes up the Book of the Gospels. After proclaiming the Gospel, the deacon takes the open Book of the Gospels to the bishop for him to kiss. The deacon then places the book at a reserved place to display and retain the reverence and dignity of the Word proclaimed.

The deacon ordinarily leads the intentions of the Universal Prayer. However, a lay minister may also do so with the permission of the bishop’s Master of Ceremony. The bishop leads the introduction and concluding prayer.

**Liturgy of the Eucharist**

The deacon accompanies the bishop to the front of the sanctuary to receive the gifts. At the altar, the deacon hands the paten with the bread to the bishop, pours wine and a little water into the chalice, praying quietly, “By the mystery of this water and wine, may we come to share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity.” After this, the deacon presents the chalice to the bishop.

If the bishop incenses the altar and gifts, the deacon does not accompany him around the altar.

The deacon receives the censer from the bishop, bows to him, and incenses him with two swings and bows again. In the same way, the deacon next incenses the concelebrants (first bishops, if present, and then concelebrants) and then the assembly.

During the Eucharistic Prayer, the deacon stands at the bishop’s right and slightly behind him. The deacon, if capable, kneels from the epiclesis through the elevation of the chalice, just before the memorial acclamation. As the bishop (and concelebrants) prepare(s) to speak or sing the final doxology, the deacon should be ready to accept the chalice from the bishop and elevate it as the bishop elevates the paten, and until the assembly has responded “Amen.”

The deacon gives the invitation to the sign of peace. The deacons may assist in distributing the Body of Christ to the concelebrating bishops and priests. After the bishop receives the Body and Blood of Christ, he will give Holy Communion to the deacon.

If extraordinary ministers of Communion have come forward, the bishop will next give them the Body of Christ. The deacon of the Eucharist should follow the bishop and minister the Precious Blood to the extraordinary ministers. If present, the Deacon of the Word and
any other deacons present in the sanctuary may assist with ministering the Precious Blood to the extraordinary ministers, as well as with handing each minister the Communion vessel from which they will minister the Body and Blood of the Lord to the assembly.

During Communion, the deacon generally ministers the Precious Blood.

If a solemn blessing is used, the deacon gives the invitation: “Bow down for the blessing.” After the blessing, one of the deacons dismisses the people, using one of the approved formulas. The bishop and deacons kiss the altar before departing the sanctuary.

VII. ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR DEACONS AND THEIR FAMILIES

A. Marriage Counseling

Any permanent deacon whose marriage is undergoing serious stress should make this known to his Spiritual Director. The Spiritual Director should make an attempt to counsel the deacon and/or the couple if needed. If this problem cannot be resolved at this level, the Vicar General should be informed of the situation. Arrangements should be made for immediate counseling.

The Vicar General may recommend that the deacon ask for a leave of absence. If counseling results in a favorable outcome, the deacon may request permission to return to ministry, in writing, to the bishop, copying the Vicar General.

In the case of an unfavorable result leading to a legal separation or divorce, the deacon may be kept on a leave of absence depending on the particular circumstances. He may or may not be permitted to return to ministry to exercise his functions as a deacon.

The deacon must petition in writing to the bishop, copying the Vicar General, for his permission to return to ministry, which will be at the discretion of the bishop.

In cases of separation or divorce, it is of the utmost importance that the rights of all parties be respected and any appearance of impropriety and/or scandal to the diocese and the Church be avoided. In this regard the deacon is to submit to the Vicar General all legal documents that have been submitted to the civil courts. These documents will be reviewed by a legal representative appointed by the bishop who will make recommendations to the bishop concerning action to be taken concerning the status of the deacon. Until these recommendations are made, the deacon, at the discretion of the bishop, will continue on a leave of absence. Once the recommendations have been made to the bishop, it will be solely his authority to determine the status of the deacon during the separation and divorce proceedings. Each case will be treated on an individual basis and the utmost confidentiality will be exercised in these matters.

B. Family Counseling

The tremendous demands made on marriages today can often be heightened by the additional challenge of ministry. Should any member of the diaconal community need the
services of a trained counselor, the deacon must contact the Vicar General for assistance. A directory of offices and counselors to contact is available through the Office of Catholic Charities.

C. Widowed Wives

All deacons should be attentive to the needs of widowed wives of deacons. If any deacon becomes aware of a particular need of a deacon's widow, he should make such need known to the Vicar General.

D. Assistance to Deacons in Need

If a deacon becomes aware of a brother deacon in need, he should, as much as possible, offer support and encouragement. In addition, he should make the need known to the Vicar General. In all cases, those involved should be sensitive to and conscious of the privacy of the individuals.

E. Personal Health Care

With all of the demands placed on a deacon's daily life and increased responsibilities, caring for the health of his family and himself must be a priority. All deacons are encouraged to have proper health care insurance coverage and participate in regular or at least an annual physical examination. Proper treatment and following medical advice will prevent health deterioration and will allow the deacon to care for the welfare of his family and himself.

When unfortunate adverse medical situations occur, and after the proper medical care has been sought, should the deacon feel that he needs assistance or intervention such need should be made known to the Vicar General. The Vicar General will communicate this information to the bishop who will make a recommendation of any action to be taken. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times and in every instance.

F. Last Will and Testament

Deacons should not write the last will and testament of any person and shall avoid the appearance of any undue influence on others who are making their last will and testament. Without permission of the bishop, a deacon shall not act as guardian, administrator, executor, trustee or agent for anyone except a member of his immediate family.
VIII. CONTINUING EDUCATION AND FORMATION OF DEACONS

Among the mandates of the Diocesan Leadership Institute will be the creation of a comprehensive and holistic program for the ongoing training, theological formation and ministerial and spiritual support of deacons.

As this program is created, its requirements will be communicated in a timely manner with the deacons of the Diocese. It is the expectation of the bishop that all deacons cooperate fully with whatever is required for ongoing training and formation.

IX. SAFE ENVIRONMENT REQUIREMENTS

A. Preamble

In accord with the “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People,” the USCCB promulgated “Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with the Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons” as approved by the Apostolic See. The Charter addresses the Church’s commitment to deal appropriately and effectively with cases of sexual abuse of minors by priests, deacons, and other church personnel.

B. Requirements

In the Diocese of Bridgeport, a Safe Environments Program has been in place since 2003 and it has made great strides in prevention, detection and early intervention efforts.

Clergy are held to higher standards of behavior than other church personnel and are required to comply with standards of behavior included and specified in the Diocesan Safe Environments Program; they are expected to avoid even the appearance of impropriety both inside and outside the scope of their ministry. This applies to all clergy and men in formation.

With that mandate, the bishop has issued a newly revised and updated set of guidelines and procedures that are consistent with the revisions to the USCCB Charter. The updated Safe Environment Handbook should be read and understood by every member of the clergy.

Every deacon in the Diocese of Bridgeport must comply with the requirements of this handbook or he will not be allowed to function in the Diocese.
X. MINISTERIAL MISCONDUCT

A. Introduction

The bishop of the Diocese of Bridgeport has put into place policy and norms for the assignment of clerics with an allegation of ministerial misconduct that applies to all clerics serving in the Diocese.

B. Overview of Policy

These ministerial misconduct norms apply to all cases when a cleric is accused of (1) misconduct involving another adult or (2) misconduct in the exercise of his ministry. In such instances, the bishop will rely on these norms in considering action regarding the cleric’s assignment, including removal or suspension of his assignment, as well as any reassignment of the cleric.

These norms are presented for both the protection of the community of the faithful and for the maintenance and protection of the integrity of the Sacrament of Holy Orders. A priest or deacon who is accused of ministerial misconduct is to be accorded the presumption of innocence during the investigation of the allegation and all appropriate actions are to be taken to protect his reputation. If the allegation is deemed not credible, every step possible is to be taken to restore his good name, should it have been harmed.

Any allegation of misconduct subject to these norms will result in an internal investigation to determine the relevant facts and information surrounding the allegation. Based on a complete review of this information, there will be a determination as to whether the allegation is credible. Once an allegation is deemed to be credible based on the facts and information available, the Bishop may choose to convene the Ministerial Advisory Board in order to assist him in assessing the plan of action to address the misconduct and the conditions regarding assignment of the cleric involved.

For more details as to how this policy is applied and the process to be followed, please refer to the latest release of the diocesan Policy.

XI. THE DEATH OF A DEACON

A. Diaconal Funeral Arrangement Sheet

Each deacon should complete a funeral arrangement sheet that is to be provided by the Chancellor’s Office. See Appendix C – Planning Sheet for a Deacon’s Funeral.

A deacon’s funeral arrangement sheet will list his family requests, personal requests and his stated preferences relative to his burial arrangements. It also includes items such as
preferred homilists, special concelebrants, assisting deacons and readings and music to be
chosen.

Please note that the funeral arrangement sheet is not the deacon’s last will and testament.

Each deacon is asked to complete his funeral arrangement sheet and submit it to the
Chancellor's Office upon ordination. The sheet will remain in each deacon’s file and may be
updated as needed. Each deacon should keep a copy for his own records.

B. General Procedures

Initial Notification of a Deacon’s Death

Upon the death of a deacon, his family is to contact the pastor of the parish where the
deacon was assigned. The pastor will notify the Chancellor’s Office. For a retired deacon,
his family is to contact the pastor of the parish in which the deacon resided and that pastor
will contact the Chancellor’s office.

Responsibilities of the Chancellor’s Office

- The Chancellor’s Office will then coordinate the arrangements for the wake and funeral
  of the deceased deacon with his pastor and family. The family of the deceased deacon
  should not finalize any funeral arrangements until the family is contacted by the
  Chancellor’s Office.

- The Chancellor’s Office will first notify the Bishop’s Office to try to accommodate the
date of the funeral with the bishop’s calendar. If the diocesan bishop is not able to
celebrate the Funeral Mass, the Vicar General should preside. The usual time for the
funeral is 10:30 AM.

- The Chancellor’s Office will contact the pastor of the parish regarding the details of the
  Funeral Mass.

- The Chancellor’s Office will notify the Public Information Office so the appropriate
  official diocesan obituary notice may be posted. This notice is separate from the notice
  that is placed by the family in other newspapers.

- The Chancellor’s Office will notify the Office of Clergy Personnel of the funeral
  arrangements for a deacon so that the diaconal community may be notified.

- The Chancellor’s Office will notify all the appropriate diocesan agencies of the funeral
  arrangements and complete the memorandum that is to be sent to all the parishes of
  the diocese. The Chancellor’s Office will request a death certificate that is kept in the
  deacon’s personnel file.
Responsibilities of the Pastor

In addition to contacting the Chancellor’s office, the pastor can appoint himself or another staff member to act as liaison between the family, parish and Liturgy office. This person will be responsible for the proper arrangements of all the liturgical events.

C. General Considerations Regarding the Funeral Rites

General Principles

a. Rites to be Celebrated: Regarding the rituals that comprise the funeral services for a deceased deacon, the rites ordinarily celebrated are:
   i. Gathering in the presence of the body at the funeral home/church, for the wake service.
   ii. Transfer of the body (if applicable) from the funeral home to the church.
   iii. Funeral Mass
   iv. Rite of Committal

b. Role of deacons: inclusion of the deacons in the various funeral rites is to be encouraged to express the ministry of deacons and the unity of those ordained to the order of deacon.

c. Language Consideration: When planning the funeral rites, considerations should be given to any language needs manifested by the family and parish.

d. Music: “Music is integral to the funeral rites.” It should be selected “with great care.” The music “should support, console, and uplift the participants and should help to create in them a spirit of hope in Christ’s victory over death and in the Christian’s share in that victory.”

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e. The Wake of a Deacon: A deceased deacon can be waked either in a funeral home selected by his family, or in a church. A deacon may request to have his wake occur in the church to which he was assigned. This would require the pastor’s approval. However, there will be no Mass of Transferal.

The deacon should be waked in white vestments proper to his order (i.e. alb, stole and dalmatic).

All liturgical norms listed below for the wake service should be observed.

• When the family first gathers in the presence of the body at the funeral home, the Rite of Gathering in the presence of the body should be celebrated.

16 OCF, #30, #31
- Evening Prayer of the Dead (OCF, #385-395) may be celebrated. The vigil service should be celebrated the night before the Funeral Mass. The Episcopal Vicar presides at this ceremony. Other ministers should participate in this rite.

- On the day of the Funeral Mass, the family and close friends gather at the funeral home in order to prepare to accompany the body of the deceased deacon to the church. The Rite of Transfer of the Body to the Church should be prayed. If one is available a deacon or a priest should lead this rite. (Omit if wake occurs in church)

**The Funeral of a Deacon**

The diocesan bishop is usually the principal celebrant of the Funeral Mass. If prevented from being present for any reason, the Vicar General will be the principal celebrant.

The Funeral Mass is ordinarily celebrated in the church to which the deacon was assigned. Deacons who were not assigned to a parish will have their funerals celebrated in their home parishes, unless the deacon or his family has made some other specific request.

The pastor of the parish and the Episcopal Vicar will be included with the special concelebrants that have been designated by the deacon or his family.

The homilist, chosen by the deceased deacon, can be a priest, deacon, or bishop.

**Final Commendation of a Deacon**

The bishop or, in his absence, the pastor will give the final commendation.
XII. DIACONAL COUNCIL

Diaconal Council By-Laws

Revised: December 15, 2015

Article I: Name

The name of this group shall be the Diaconal Council of the Diocese of Bridgeport, hereafter known as the “Council.”

Article II: Purpose and Function

The Council serves as an advisory body to the Diocesan Bishop regarding the ongoing formation, ministry and life of deacons and diaconate candidates in the Diocese. It will represent the diverse population of deacons, their wives and families.

1. The Council provides the diocesan bishop with concerns, needs and suggestions that arise from the diaconal community. Its members can also present possible solutions and plans for implementation to address these needs and concerns.

2. The Council will recommend guidelines, policies, programs, or events designed to help the diaconate community flourish spiritually, intellectually, socially, and in service of God’s People.

3. The Council will raise awareness of the vocation of the deacon in the life of the Church. The deacon by his ordination is asked to embody and manifest Jesus the Servant within the community of believers. Our diaconal service should “inspire, and enthuse the faithful, giving them courage and strength, that they, in turn, may serve their brothers and sisters in the imitation of Christ.”

Article III: Membership

The Council is a working group drawn from the diaconate community of the Diocese of Bridgeport. Any deacon incardinated and living in the Diocese of Bridgeport is eligible to serve on the Council.

Section I: Composition:

A. The Council is composed of nine elected and two appointed members of the diaconate of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

B. Six deacons are elected to represent their individual vicariates, three deacons are elected to represent their “years of service” group, and two deacons are appointed as “At-Large” members of the Council by the diocesan bishop.

C. The diocesan bishop and the Director of the Diaconate serve as ex officio members of the Council.

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Section II: Selection of Members

A. One deacon from each of the six vicariates of the Diocese of Bridgeport shall be elected as a member of the Council. Only permanent deacons who are incardinated and have faculties within the Diocese of Bridgeport may be elected to the Council as members.

B. Deacons shall elect these members to the Council from within each respective vicariate where they are assigned.

C. The bishop shall appoint two “at-large” members to the Council.

D. One deacon shall be elected to represent deacons on the basis of diaconal experience (i.e. “years of service”) in each of three distinctive age groups to be proposed by the Council and approved by the Diocesan Bishop in advance of each election.

Section III: Election of Members

A. The Director of the Diaconate will organize and conduct the election of members to the Council, and Council members will be available to assist in this process.

B. To aid in the continuity and smooth functioning of the Council, deacons serving in each vicariate of the Diocese shall elect a deacon representative to the Council every third year. Terms-of-office are for three years.

C. Voting for elected members will be by written ballot through the mail.

D. Nominees with the highest number of votes shall be considered elected, with the approval of the Diocesan Bishop. Tie votes shall be decided by the Bishop.

E. Deacons from each of the three “years of service” groups will select two names from among all the members of the group listed on their ballots. The Council will select the two top candidates in each service grouping and a run-off election for each group will be held. Deacons who belong to each service group will elect the member for that group.

Section IV: Participation on the Council

a. All members of the Council may chair or serve on committees, speak at meetings, present motions and vote on the deliberations of the Council.

b. At the discretion of the diocesan bishop, all other deacons of the diocese and their wives may attend the Council meetings and be recognized by the Chairman to address the Council, but they are not allowed to vote. Any deacon not on the council, or his wife, must contact the Chairman of the Council previous to any council meeting to ask if the bishop is permitting non-members of the Council to attend that meeting.

Article IV: Structure

Section I: Terms of Membership
A. An elected Council member serves for a term of three years and may be re-elected for one additional consecutive term.
B. Appointed members serve on a three-year basis and may be reappointed for one additional term at the discretion of the diocesan bishop.
C. The term of membership shall commence in the month following elections.

Section II: Duties of the Council:

A. The duties of the Council exist to maintain its proper functioning according to the by-laws:
B. To coordinate and implement the activities of the Council.
C. To present to the diocesan bishop and the Director of the Diaconate resolutions for consideration.
D. To advise the diocesan bishop and the Director of the Diaconate as requested.
E. To appoint or dissolve committees of the Council.
F. To assist in coordinating gatherings of the Diaconate community on a Diocesan level.

Section III: Meetings

A. The Council shall meet at least four times a year.
B. The diocesan bishop may call for a special meeting of the Council.
C. All meetings of the Council will be conducted in accordance with the most recent revision of Robert’s Rules of Order.
D. The Council ordinarily meets in person. However, if circumstances warrant, the Council may also meet telephonically, as determined by the Chairman or the diocesan bishop.

Section IV: Quorum

A. The voting body shall be composed of all elected and appointed members of the Council.
B. A quorum shall consist of greater than fifty percent of the voting body as described above.

Section V: Removal from Membership

A. An elected Council member who has been absent without excuse from three consecutive Council meetings may lose membership on the Council, pending a decision by the diocesan bishop. To complete the term of a member, another deacon from the cohort where the vacancy exists shall replace the Council member. This appointment will be made by the Diocesan Bishop on the recommendation of the Chairman of the Council.
B. An appointed Council member who has been absent from three consecutive Council meetings without the permission of the Chairman may lose membership on the
Council. The need to remove the member for reasons of absenteeism shall be reported to the Bishop for his determination. To complete the term of office, the Council member shall be replaced by another deacon who will be appointed by the Bishop.

C. All members of the Council serve at the discretion of the bishop.

Section VI: Vacancy

A. When the Diocesan See is vacated, the Diaconal Council shall cease to function as an official body.

Article V: Officers

Section I: Designation:

A. The Council shall elect the following officers from its own membership: Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Recording Secretary.

Section II: Term of Office:

A. Officers shall be elected for a term of three years.

Section III: Vacancy in Office:

A. A vacancy in the office of the Chairman shall be filled by the Vice Chairman who will complete the unexpired term.

B. A vacancy in any other office shall be filled by election of the Council. The person elected will complete the unexpired term.

Section IV: Duties of Officers:

A. The Chairman shall:
   a. Preside at and conduct all meetings of the Council.
   b. Determine the agenda for all meetings of the Council, presented to the bishop for prior approval.
   c. Recommend to the Council the appointment of members to committees created by the Council.
   d. In collaboration with the Director of the Diaconate, ensure that information concerning Council decisions and deliberations is communicated to the diaconate community.
   e. Perform such other duties as pertain to the office.

B. The Vice Chairman shall:
   a. Perform the duties of the Chairman in the absence or inability of the
Chairman to serve.

b. Succeed to the office of Chairman should the position become vacant on the termination, resignation or disability of the Chairman.

c. Perform such duties as may be assigned by the Chairman of the Council.

C. The Recording Secretary shall:

a. Be responsible for recording the minutes of all meetings of the Council.

b. Provide the Council members and the Diaconate office with copies of agendas and minutes of all meetings of the Council.

c. Publish the minutes of Council meetings for all members of the Diaconal Council.

Section V: Election of Council Officers

A. The election of Council officers shall take place at the first meeting of the Council following the determination of the need for an election.

B. Consent of nominees must be obtained before their names can be submitted for election.

C. Voting for elected members may be by open or secret ballot, as determined by the Council.

D. Nominees with the highest number of votes shall be considered elected.

E. Those elected will take office immediately upon their election.

Article VI: Committees

Section I: General

A. The Council may create committees as are necessary.

B. Membership on committees shall not be restricted to Deacons.

C. Committee chairman and members shall be selected by the Chairman of the Council.

D. The Director of the Diaconate is an ex-officio member of all committees.

Section II: Standing Committees:

A. The council shall oversee the establishment and the functioning of the following two Standing Committees:

1. The Sons of Saint Stephen Formation Committee;
   a. Shall organize and oversee ongoing formation programs for deacons of the diocese.
   b. The committee shall also organize spiritual activities and retreats for the deacons and their wives and families.

2. Diaconal Formation Committee
   a. Shall provide counsel to the Bishop regarding the diaconal formation program.
   b. The committee is also free to propose new initiatives for formation
to the bishop and the Director of the Diaconate.

Article VII: Revision to the By-Laws

A. The by-laws of the Council are promulgated by the diocesan bishop. They remain in effect until revoked by the bishop.
B. Any revision of the by-laws can be proposed by the Council after proper deliberation and a 2/3 vote of the entire body.
C. Upon presentation to the diocesan bishop, revisions may be approved.
Appendix A

Glossary of Terms

For the purposes of this Manual the following definitions will apply:

1. **Active Ministry**: The regular and recurring exercise of rights and obligations pertaining to and deriving from a deacon’s ordination.
2. **Assignment**: An official appointment made by the Bishop designating the community, parish, agency or other specialized ministry in which the Deacon shall be in active ministry.
3. **Bishop**: The Bishop of the Diocese of Bridgeport.
4. **Deacon**: A person who has been validly ordained to the diaconate as a distinct ministry.
5. **Diocesan Council**: A council of appointed and elected deacons to serve as an advisory and consultative body to the Bishop, the Vicar General, and the Director of the Diaconate; to represent the deacons; and to serve their spiritual and corporal needs.
6. **Diocese**: The Diocese of Bridgeport, CT, USA.
7. **Director of the Diaconate**: The person who has been appointed by the bishop as the one who attends to the day-to-day operation of the Office of the Diaconate.
8. **Episcopal Master of Ceremonies**: Refers to the Bishop’s Master of Ceremonies or another cleric designated to coordinate liturgical celebrations for the bishop.
9. **Faculties**: A faculty is a permission by the local bishop enabling a deacon to act in a way that the deacon would not otherwise be empowered or authorized to act.
10. **Office**: The Office of Clergy Personnel
11. **Pastor**: The pastor of the parish where the deacon is or will be assigned.
12. **Retired Deacon**: A deacon who has requested and received permission from the local bishop to cease functioning in an assigned ministry. In other words, the bishop no longer assigns him to a community, parish, agency or other specialized ministry.
13. **Sabbatical**: An extended period of leave from ministry granted by the bishop for the purpose of a deacon seeking more advanced or intensive study, reflection, etc.
14. **Leave of Absence**: An approved time away from ministry for serious cause due to personal, spiritual or familial issues for a determined period of time and granted by the bishop.
15. **Abbreviations**
   i. CCC: *Catechism of the Catholic Church.*
   ii. CIC: *Code of Canon Law.*
Appendix B - Diocese of Bridgeport Deacon Ministerial Agreement

Pastor/Administrator ___________________________ & Deacon ___________________________

*Important care must be given to the priorities in the life of the Deacon: Family, employment and ministry should be the proper sequence of priorities in the life of the Permanent Deacon, so it is not only the responsibility of the Permanent Deacon, but also of the diaconal family as a whole and the clergy, that these priorities are well observed and respected for the successful ministry of the Permanent Deacon.*

The parish of ___________________________ in the Diocese of Bridgeport, represented by the Pastor or Administrator whose signature appears below, enters into a ministerial agreement with Deacon ___________________________ who has been assigned to the parish by the Diocesan Bishop.

This Ministerial Agreement covers the ministerial services that Deacon will provide to the parish, in keeping with the policies of this manual.

This Ministerial Agreement covers the following five year period:

___________ to ____________.

Ministerial responsibilities shall be defined as: (please select all that apply and specify frequency as needed)

☐ Active Participation in Clergy + Pastoral Staff Meetings
☐ Assisting at Mass
☐ Baptism Preparation for Parents
☐ Celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism
☐ Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage
☐ Celebration of Wake Services and/or Funeral Services
☐ Communion Services when needed
☐ Coordinate Parish Ministries Societies
☐ Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction
☐ Funeral Social Service Projects in the Parish and community at large
☐ Hospital / Nursing Home and Home visits to the sick
☐ Occasional Parish Office Duty
☐ Participating in diocesan and public ministry works of charity
☐ Preaching
☐ RCIA Ministry
☐ Sacrament of Marriage and Wedding Ceremony Preparation
☐ Youth Ministry
☐ Other (Please describe)

If there were significant travel in the ministry of the deacon to the parish, the deacon should be reimbursed for any expenses incurred for this reason, as well
as other expenses for the preparation or distribution of materials.

When completing this agreement, care should be taken that the wife is present and participates in the conversation. A brief summary should be added to this document when necessary.

This agreement is subject to be reviewed yearly by the pastor and the deacon. A copy of this agreement must be filed with the Office for Clergy Personnel.

Summary Notes Section:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Pastor / Administrator Name (Please Print):

__________________________________________
Signature

__________________________________________
Date

Deacon Name (Please Print):

__________________________________________
Signature

__________________________________________
Date
Appendix C – Funeral Arrangements for a Deacon

PLANNING SHEET FOR A DEACON’S FUNERAL

Please complete this form in its entirety and seal it in an envelope with your name and the notation “Funeral Planning Information” written on the front. The envelope will remain sealed until the Chancellor’s Office is advised of your passing. The Planning sheet should be updated every five years or whenever substantive changes occur.

****************************************************************************

Today’s Date: _______________________

Name: _______________________________________________________________________

Address: _____________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

I. Persons who will oversee your funeral arrangements. (Please list in order of preference with contact information.)

1. __________________________________________________________________________

2. __________________________________________________________________________

3. __________________________________________________________________________

II. Three Deacons who will assist at the funeral when a Bishop is present. (Please list in order of preference.)

1. __________________________________________________________________________

2. __________________________________________________________________________

3. __________________________________________________________________________

III. Concelebrants for the funeral. (There are usually 4, possibly 10 concelebrants. Please list in order of preference.)

1. ______________________ 6. ______________________

2. ______________________ 7. ______________________

3. ______________________ 8. ______________________

4. ______________________ 9. ______________________

5. ______________________ 10. ______________________
IV. Homilist for the funeral. *(Please list in order of preference.)*
1. ______________________ 2. ______________________ 3. ______________________

V. Priest/Deacon for the Rite of Committal at the Cemetery.
1. ______________________
2. ______________________

VI. PLANNING THE WAKE SERVICE
First Reading ______________________
Gospel ______________________
Homilist:  
  a. ______________________
  b. ______________________

*Readings and Psalm are to be chosen from the Order of Christian Funerals*

VII. PLANNING THE FUNERAL MASS
1. Music:
   a. Entrance Hymn ______________________
   b. Offertory Hymn ______________________
   c. Communion Hymn ______________________
   d. Recessional Hymn ______________________
2. Readings and Psalm *(From the Order of Christian Funerals)*
   a. First Reading ______________________
   b. Resp. Psalm ______________________
   c. Second Reading ______________________
   d. Gospel ______________________

VIII. LANGUAGE
First Request ______________________
Bilingual ______________________ and ______________________
Appendix D#1

Sample letter from a deacon to the new (Arch)bishop\textsuperscript{18} of the (Arch)diocese to which he is moving

(Date)

(Deacon's home address)
(City, State, Zip code)

Your Excellency:

I am a deacon of the Diocese of Bridgeport in good standing. By reason of employment (or for reasons of health and on the recommendation of my doctor), I shall be relocating into your (Arch)diocese after the beginning of (month).

Following my arrival in the (Arch)diocese of ________, I shall call your office to request an appointment to call on Your Excellency or your designated representative. I have requested of my (Arch)bishop that a letter of introduction be sent to Your Excellency.

Sincerely yours,

(Deacon's name typed)

Most Reverend
(Arch)bishop of ________
Address
City, State, Zip code

cc: Director of deacons

\textsuperscript{18} Bishops and Archbishops are addressed, "Your Excellency"; Cardinals are addressed, "Your Eminence."
Sample Letter from a deacon to the Bishop
informing him of an impending move from the diocese

(Date)

(Deacon's home address)
(City, State, Zip code)

Your Excellency:

By reason of transfer of employment (or reason of condition of health and recommendation of change in climate by my doctor), it is my intention to leave the Diocese of Bridgeport and Resettle in the (Arch)diocese of ____________, effective ______________.

It is requested that a letter be sent to the (Arch)bishop of ___(name)___ providing information of this move with appropriate letters of recommendation and evaluation.

Sincerely yours,

(Deacon's name typed)

Bishop Frank Caggiano
Bishop of Bridgeport
238 Jewett Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06606

cc: Vicar General
    Director of the Diaconate
Appendix D#3

Sample letter from a deacon to the Bishop stating his intention to seek Incardination elsewhere

(Date)

(Deacon's home address)
(City, State, Zip code)

Your Excellency:

I have been a resident in the (Arch)diocese of ___name______ for _________years. It appears that I shall be living here indefinitely. During this time I have been given faculties to minister in the (Arch)diocese of ___(name)_____.

After prayerful reflection, it is my intention, God willing, to seek incardination in the (Arch)diocese of _____(name)____ and excardination from the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Sincerely yours,

(Deacon's name typed)

Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano
Bishop of Bridgeport
238 Jewett Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06606

cc: Vicar General
    Director of the Diaconate
Sample letter from a deacon to the receiving (Arch)bishop requesting Incardination

(Date)

(Home address of deacon)
(City, State, Zip code)

Your Excellency:

Having served the (Arch)diocese of ____ (name)____ for ______ years with favorable evaluations of my ministry, because of pastoral needs of the (Arch)diocese, my own interest and pastoral formation, I desire to continue to provide pastoral ministry.

I have therefore requested excardination from my diocese of incardination, Diocese of Bridgeport, Connecticut, and the His Excellency has indicated his willingness to grant this. I now hereby request incardination in the (Arch)diocese of ____ (name)____ and declare that I wish to be dedicated to the service of the (Arch)diocese of ____ (name)____ in accord with the norm of law.

Sincerely yours,

(Deacon’s name typed)

Most Reverend
(Arch)bishop of _______
Address
City, State, Zip code

cc: Director of deacons
Sample letter from a deacon requesting Excardination

(Date)

(Deacon's home address)
(City, State, Zip code)

Your Excellency:

Because of the pastoral needs of the (Arch)diocese of ___(name)___ and because of my own interest and pastoral formation, I desire to continue to provide pastoral ministry in the (Arch)diocese of ___(name)____.

My relocation to the (Arch)diocese of ___(name)___ was occasioned by reason of (employment, health, etc). What appeared to have been a temporary arrangement I have now been assured by my employers will be on a more stable basis. The prospect of long-term residence is now assured and the (Arch)bishop of ___(name)____ has expressed a willingness to incardinate me.

In light of the above, I am therefore requesting excardination from the Diocese of Bridgeport in order that I might incardinate in the (Arch)diocese of ___(name)____.

Sincerely yours,

(Deacon's name typed)

Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano
Bishop of Bridgeport
238 Jewett Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06606

cc: Vicar General
    Director of deacons