

## **A DEACON**

In our parish, we have no Deacon, and I've often wondered what our parishioners know about them. The following is a:

### **SIMPLE EXPLANATION.**

Deacons and priests are ministers of religion, and a Bishop ordains both. A deacon's role can be either PERMANENT or TRANSITIONAL.

**Permanent** ones are ordained to remain in that role.

**Transitional** ones continue their training before being ordained into the priesthood.

Unlike a priest, a Permanent Deacon can be married, have a family, and have a separate job outside the Church.

When a man feels the call to be a priest, he's first assessed by a diocese's Vocations Director. The bishop then decides if a particular man is suitable.

After about two years of training, all candidates are ordained into a deacon and, after five more years, into the priesthood.

Permanent Deacons are men of faith and prayer who desire to serve others for God's kingdom.

Some of their main activities involve using the local church to serve the poor and the vulnerable and support parish groups. During mass, a Deacon can assist the Bishop or Priest.

They help the parish priest in many of his administrations and may officiate in place of a priest for services such as:

baptisms, Weddings, Funerals, and burial services outside the mass, distribute communion, and preach the Homily after the Readings at mass. When a priest is not available, they can also preside as the Leader at the special service called the 'Celebration of Word and Communion'.

### **THE SERVICES THEY CAN NOT OFFICIATE AT ARE:**

Confirmation (bishop).

Holy Eucharist (priest).

Sacrament of Reconciliation (priest).

Anointing the Sick (priest).

Holy Orders (Bishop).

The Mass (priest).

During many religious services, deacons wear:

An ALB (A full-length white vestment) over normal clothing.  
A STOLE over the Alb (It's like a broad stiff scarf).  
A Dalmatic, which covers them all.

The stole hangs around the back of the neck and across the shoulder to the front. It then crosses the chest from the left shoulder to the waist on the right. A priest's stole does the same but hangs down the front in two straight lines. The colour of the Dalmatic will vary with the type of feast day in the same way a priest's vestments are coloured.

If you went to a parish you'd never been to before to attend a service that only required vestments such as an ALB and STOLE, how would you know if the person officiating at the service was a deacon or priest?

LOOK AT THE STOLE. IF IT'S HUNG FROM THE LEFT SHOULDER ACROSS THE BODY TO THE RIGHT WAIST, IT'S A DEACON. IF IT'S A PRIEST, IT WILL HANG DOWN THE BODY IN TWO STRAIGHT LINES.

If you have a Deacon in your parish, remember he's given up much to help your parish and its members. Show your appreciation for what he does by giving him all the help you can.

IF YOU ARE MALE, MARRIED OR NOT, HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT BECOMING A DEACON?

If you have, contact your parish priest.