

Diocese of Venice in Florida



Diaconate Handbook

Life & Ministry



APPROVED BY

His Excellency, Bishop Frank J. Dewane

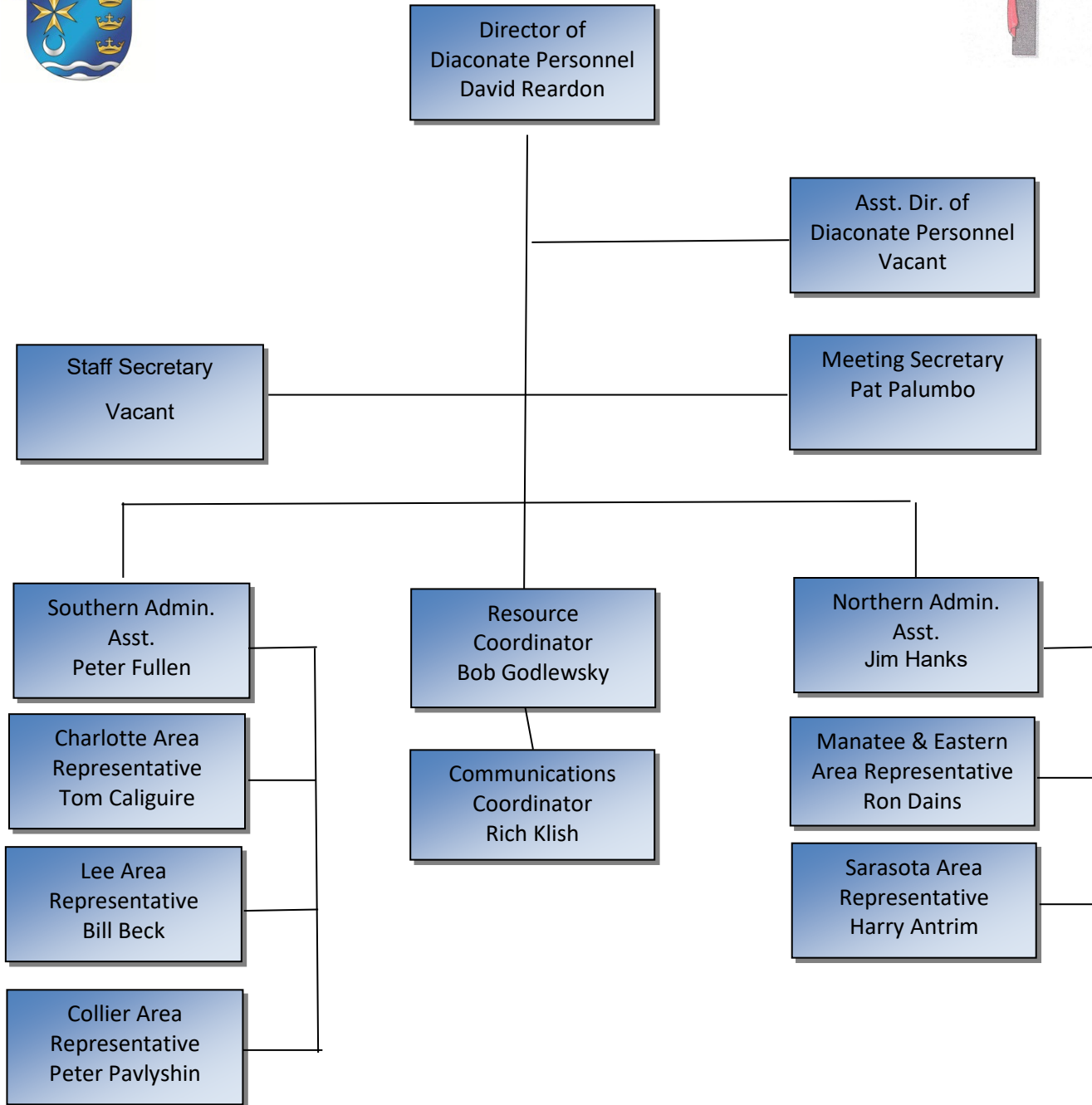
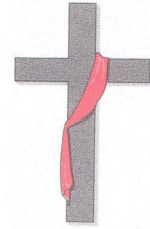


This Diaconate Handbook contains information on the practices of the Permanent Diaconate of the Diocese of Venice in Florida. These practices reflect the Diocesan's values and each deacon will find this document a valuable reference for understanding his ministerial responsibilities in the Diocese.



Diocese of Venice

Office of the Diaconate Life & Ministry



I. Extern Deacons Seeking Ministerial Faculties for the Diocese

Extern deacons cannot be over 70 years of age and must reside in the Diocese at least nine months annually. Otherwise, see paragraph II below.

The following documentation and actions must be provided:

- A letter from the extern deacon to our Bishop, addressed to the Diaconate Office, requesting faculties
- An interview will be held with a Staff Member of the Diaconate Office
- An Investigation Release form
- A Personnel Data form
- A Passport Photo
- A completed Attestation of Moral Character form
- A Diocesan "Code of Conduct" must be read, and a signed receipt must be provided by the extern deacon that he understands it
- A certificate of attendance at a Safe Environment Training session
- Fingerprinting by one of the Diocesan vendors, with notification by our Diocesan finger-print record keeper that clearance has been obtained
- That the Diocesan policy of "Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults" has been read and understood with a signed copy of the attestation (Appendix II of the policy) must be returned to the Diaconate Office.
- A seven-point "Letter of Good Standing" from the Extern's present diocese of incardination
- A current Baptismal Certificate

A Ministerial Agreement will be provided as described in paragraph III below.

Once these documents and actions are complete an appointment with the Bishop will be scheduled. Once the process for assignment and faculties have been approved, letters will be addressed to the Pastor of assignment confirming the assignment and the approved pagella. Note that the faculty to preach will not be included in the pagella.

II. Ministerial Agreements

The agreement establishes the responsibilities and obligations of the deacon and his pastor or supervisor. Their relationship should be one of open communication, mutual trust, good faith and a mutually agreed-upon assignments. Depending upon needs, the agreement may not be all-inclusive.

After the agreement has been signed by the deacon and his pastor/supervisor, it is to be forwarded to the Diaconate Office for approval by the Bishop for a three-year term. It will include the estimated annual cost for the deacon's continuing education and retreat.

III. The Faculty to Preach

Deacons have the faculty to preach according to Canon Law but authorization to preach at the Sunday Mass in the Diocese of Venice must be granted by the Bishop -- even if the deacon has the faculty from his former diocese.

When faculties are first granted it should be noted that the deacon has the faculty to preach the Word of God at Baptisms, Marriages, Vigil Services for the Dead and memorial services.

The following must be satisfied before the faculty to preach at Sunday Mass may be granted by the Bishop after his review:

- The deacon must function ministerially in the Diocese for one year
- The deacon must attend a 20-hour post-ordination course in homiletics provided by the Diocese
- The deacon must satisfactorily present two homilies to an evaluation panel consisting of priests and deacons at the end of the course

The Resource Coordinator, under the direction of the Director of Diaconate Personnel, will regularly provide information on available courses and spiritual growth programs. The deacons are encouraged to attend these opportunities whenever possible.

In order to accommodate the deacon's schedules, the Director of Diaconate Personnel will provide a yearly schedule of events in order to promote attendance at General Meetings, Retreats, and Days of Recollection.

IV. Continuing Education

To enhance the life of faith and further the quality of diaconal ministry, all permanent deacons under the retirement age of 80 are to participate in an annual program of continuing education and spiritual formation.

An annual minimum of (18) hours of continuing education is required and must be reported to the Director of Diaconate Personnel -- with forms provided -- by the end of March.

The Director of Diaconate Personnel will provide an annual schedule of events such as general meetings, retreats and days of recollection.

V. Retreats

According to Canon Law a minimum of one annual retreat is to be made. It should be at least 24 consecutive hours in duration. The cost is to be paid by the deacon's place of assignment. Financial responsibility for all other retreats is upon the deacon.

If a deacon cannot attend the annual deacon retreats, he may attend the annual student formation retreat or another retreat of his choice.

VI. General Meetings

General meetings are held three times per year at various parishes throughout the Diocese. Wives of deacons are invited to attend. Meetings begin with continental breakfast at 9:30 a.m., followed by Morning Prayer at 10:00 a.m. The remainder of the morning is devoted to a lecture program. Two CEU's are granted for the annual continuing education requirements. Lunch is served at noon followed by a business meeting. Wives meet separately after lunch for discussions, spiritual programs or other activities.

VII. Clerical Dress Code for Deacons in the Diocese of Venice

The following requirements are given for the deacon wearing clerical garb in the Diocese of Venice. It is optional, unless directed by the pastor or Bishop.

Clerical garb may be worn:

- When assisting the Bishop at liturgy
- When assisting at any Mass in the Diocese (with permission of the pastor)
- When the deacon is the presider at any para-liturgy
- When visiting jails, prisons, hospitals, nursing homes or homes

Clerical garb may NOT be worn:

- At social events
- When simply attending Mass without assisting

Vesting with alb and stole should be done when:

- Assisting the Bishop at Mass but with dalmatic when available
- Assisting at other Masses - with dalmatic when available
- Attending the Chrism Mass with the diaconate community as a body
- Attending the Veteran's Day Mass at the National Cemetery
- Attending the funeral Mass for a deacon
- As the presider or services that do not include the Mass

Deacons should not vest when attending a funeral Mass for a priest unless assisting at the altar.

Deacons should not vest when attending a funeral Mass for the wife of a deacon.

VIII. Rosters

A roster of deacons serving in the Diocese will be provided semi-annually for the diaconate community electronically. Hard copies will be mailed to those who do not have computer access

IX. Dues

Dues are collected annually during the month of January to provide for Mass cards for our deceased deacons and wives. Gifts are given to various organizations and charities. Retired deacons are not obligated to pay dues

X. Incardination

Extern deacons may be incardinated into the Diocese of Venice with the following requirements.

- Extern deacons must be no older than 55 years of age and must apply to the Bishop in writing requesting incardination.
- After serving in ministry in the Diocese for 4-1/2 years, the deacon must petition the Bishop once again in writing that he desires to be incardinated into the Diocese.
- The deacon must present two letters of recommendation to the Bishop from his pastor/supervisor and another with whom he has shared ministry.
- He must request excardination in writing from his current bishop.

XI. Retirement

Deacons will be retired in the Diocese upon reaching their 80th birthday. They and their pastors/supervisors will be notified by mail by the Bishop. A deacon may request an earlier retirement in writing to the Bishop.

A retired deacon is no longer obligated to make an annual retreat, pay dues, submit an annual continuing education report -- or if he so desires, take further courses.