

If however the person is a member of the gathered community of a parish then deacons should make every effort to locate the parish priest to undertake the ministry of anointing.

There may well be occasions where a priest may ask a deacon to undertake the ministry of anointing for a specified time. This may occur if the priest is away from the parish, on holidays or having a day off.

As with Extended Communion, the Bishop must approve a deacon as someone appropriate to undertake this ministry.

FUNERALS

Deacons conduct funeral services of those among whom they have been ministering. This is particularly important when the family of the person concerned requests this. It allows for a continuity of ministry and it gives to people who are often outside the boundaries or margins of the church a measure of the compassion of the church. The important message which the church needs to proclaim is the love and mercy of Jesus Christ.

In a growing number of cases people who are outside the sphere of the church seek either a graveside funeral or a service in a crematorium. Often for a deacon this can be a place where they are more able to serve in a way which helps a family glimpse hope.

HOLY BAPTISM.

Holy Baptism is addressed in a separate paper.

DIOCESAN LITURGIES

It is important that on great occasions in the life of the diocese, when we come together liturgically, that these services include the role of the deacon as

described above. The liturgy expresses the episcopal role, the presbyteral role and the lay role. It should therefore express the full picture of the life of the church by including the diaconal role. As the Bishop is often the celebrant in such liturgy, it is appropriate for the deacon to introduce the memorial acclamation in the Thanksgiving with the words "Let us proclaim the mystery of faith" (APBA p 145)

This document is meant to be read in conjunction with the booklet, *A New Life in Christ: The Distinctive Ministry of the Deacon* (Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn, 2007)

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Exploring Diaconal Ministry — Paper 3

THE LITURGICAL ROLE OF DEACONS

PREAMBLE

- Deacons are ordained to ministry.
- Deacons belong to 'a full and equal order'.
- Deacons are called to a servant ministry on the margins and boundaries of life.
- Deacons model diaconal ministry which belongs to the whole church.
- Deacon's ministries may not comfortably fit into parish or diocesan boundaries.
- Deacons can help to explore ministry responses to difficult issues faced by the church.

DEACONS AND LITURGY

The liturgical role of a deacon is governed by the ministry situation to which the deacon has been licensed.

- Most diaconal ministries do not fit into parish boundaries. For instance if a deacon ministers in a particular field in an urban situation, what they do may easily cross parish boundaries.
- In a rural area there is more chance that their work comes closer to parish boundaries.



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Essentially parishes have been created to enable the priestly ministry of the church to the gathered community in a convenient geographical manner.

- ✦ Deacons are called to minister among the marginalised, the poor, the lonely, the sick and the hungry. These people do not gather conveniently in church buildings which were once well-placed geographically.

It is vital that a deacon be an integral part of a community of faith. Often this will be in the congregation from which the deacon has been called to diaconal ministry and through whom the deacon is supported. Deacons, like laity and other clergy alike, need a place of nurture. If a deacon has a liturgical ministry it is in this setting that it will mainly take place.

MIRROR OF DIACONAL MINISTRY

Where deacons exercise a liturgical role, that role should be a mirror of diaconal ministry, enabling the members of the gathered community to see their own diaconal role.

This liturgical role should include

- ✦ the reading of the Gospel,
- ✦ calling the people to repentance in the confession,
- ✦ preparing and cleaning the table, and
- ✦ sending the people out into the world to carry out the ministry to which they have been called.

By reading the Gospel a deacon proclaims the ministry of Christ to which all are called.

Leading the people in the confession is a prophetic role.

Preparing the Lord's table and cleaning up after the communion mirrors the role of the servant ministry.

Dismissing the people following the priestly blessing takes the people along with the deacon into diaconal ministry in the community.

It is also acceptable for the deacon to, at times, to be rostered to lead the prayers of the people.

PREACHING

Where a deacon is called to preach this too may be included in the liturgical role. It should be noted that the preaching of a deacon will differ in its primary focus to that of the priest. The deacon's words will unwaveringly point the congregation towards Christ's mission in the world illustrated by examples of servant ministry in action.

A SPECIAL MINISTRY

One of the most powerful liturgical ministries of the deacon comes on Maundy Thursday where priest and deacon together wash the feet of the people, sharing this vision of servant ministry which was ordained by Christ himself.

EXTENDED COMMUNION

It is most appropriate for a deacon to take Extended Communion to people who are unable by age or sickness to come to the church for the Eucharist. This should be carried out according to the policy of the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn. It is also important that where a parish priest sends a list of appropriate lay ministers to take Extended Communion from the parish church that the deacon's name should also be submitted in that list.

A deacon should never take Extended Communion from the parish church to a branch church of the parish. This is a gathered community ministry and if a priest is not available then an approved lay minister should undertake this role. Again the deacon may take those liturgical roles which mirror diaconal ministry.

A WORD OF CAUTION

One of the problems that can occur in a deacon's ministry happens when a community is gathered around a deacon. This could happen where some of a deacon's ministry takes place say in a Nursing Home where the deacon walks the road of life with the residents.

If this seems to be happening then the deacon needs to encourage the ministry of others in that situation. A wise move might be that where Extended Communion is taking place then an approved lay minister might lead the service and the deacon then takes the roles normally undertaken in the liturgy. The most appropriate model of communion in a facility as described above is that of the parish priest celebrating the Eucharist.

ANOINTING

Where a deacon's ministry involves the marginalised, the sick and the poor there will may be occasions when the ministry of Anointing is needed. This will often occur when someone is very ill or approaching death. If a deacon has been providing ministry to a person and their family then it is most appropriate for them to anoint the person using the oil blessed by the bishop, using a form of words from *A Prayer Book for Australia* or similar approved resource.