

Date: July 12, 2019

To: Deacons and Men in Formation for the Permanent Diaconate

From: Deacon Dave Camous, Director of Permanent Deacons
Deacon Joe Gassman, Secretary for Leadership and Parish Life

Re: Promulgation of revised Diaconate Personnel Manual, Effective July 1, 2019

Brothers in Christ:

May the grace of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, be with you all.

We are pleased to announce that the bishop, Most Reverend John Noonan, has promulgated the revised Diaconate Personnel Manual effective July 1st. The previous directive “Diocese of Orlando, Personnel Policy for the Permanent Diaconate” was promulgated in October 1993. Many of the governing and guiding Church documents, policies and practices concerning the Permanent Diaconate have matured over the years. The following Church documents have distribution dates after the release of our previous policy document.

- 1998 General Directory for Catechists,
- 1998 Code of Canon Law: Latin-English Edition,
- 2000 Catechism of the Catholic Church,
- 2002 Rites of Ordination of a Bishop, Priests, and of Deacons (Second Typical Edition),
and
- 2004 National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in
the United States. (Revision 2 approved June, 2019)

This Diaconate Personnel Manual (referred to henceforth as the Manual) is a complete revision that has been worked on over the past ten years and more intently over the past two years as the diaconate formation program has evolved and greater understanding of the deacon’s identity has unfolded throughout the world and within our own diocese.

At the end of this document is the Policy Acknowledgement Form that we ask all deacons and men in diaconal formation to complete and return to the Office of the Permanent Diaconate.

The remainder of this document will summarize the key revisions of the Manual’s structure and core content:

1. **What has been deleted?**

- a. All reference to the “Deacon Counsel” that was dissolved in 2011.
- b. All Forms were removed. The most current required forms are managed internally, and the most current versions are made available on the Diocesan Deacons webpage or sent via email.

2. **Personnel Philosophy and Administration** (para 1 - 2). The Manual has been restructured completely to present a logical flow of information and structure. It utilizes references and electronic links to existing diocesan policies which has greatly reduced the size of the manual.

3. **Identity, Vocation, Mission** (para 3 - 9). Scripture, the above referenced documents, the lived experiences of the deacons who assisted in the revision of The Manual, and the Bishop’s vision of the diaconate shaped this section to crystalize “who the deacon is,” not just what he does.

4. **Relationship** (para 10 - 16). Once the deacon knows who his is, he understands his life is all about relationships with our bishop, our priests, and the children of God.

5. **Order of Deacons** (para 17 - 34).

- a. Para 17 - 20 are dedicated to informing the deacon of the organizational structure of the diocese, our status within the diocese and our commitment to know and follow all policies and procedures. It directs us where to find policy documents.
- b. Para 21 - 26 explains the structure and responsibilities of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate.
- c. Para 27 – 33 defines classifications of deacons (incardinated & extern) as well as their status. You will note that we did not use the status of “retired”. The status of “Senior” (para 30) includes those who have reached the mandatory retirement age but remain “active” in ministry. CARA studies use the term “Retired-Active”. A sample letter is included in the appendix G.
- d. Para 34 is dedicated to explaining what it means to be a “Deacon in Good Standing” and the annual requirements and commitments to maintain this status. When working on this section we’ve revised many of the forms.
 - i. We are discontinuing the use of the “Statement of Mutual Expectations” (SME). In its place the deacon will complete a “Deacon’s Annual Self-Assessment” and the Pastor will complete a “Pastor’s Assessment &

Need” form. We feel this process will give the pastor more control to direct the deacons to the ministry needs of the pastor & parish.

6. **Policies** (para 35 - 61).

- a. Para 35 standardizes the clerical title for a permanent deacon as “Deacon”.
- b. Para 37 introduces a new form, “Pastor – Deacon Ministerial Covenant”. This covenant must be completed “with” the Pastor when a deacon is newly ordained, externs requesting faculties, and deacon requesting a transfer to a new assignment. This is an effort to improve development of relationship between the Pastor and the deacon.
- c. Para 38 does not change the norm of a deacon’s clerical attire. It does include language to respond to an increasing demand of certain ministries for the use of the clerical attire specifically by hospital Chaplains. The policy simply states that the deacon must request permission from the bishop through the Office of the Permanent Diaconate for an exception to the existing policy that the deacon will dress as a lay person.
- d. Para 39 is a new paragraph directing deacons to the source documents for the all the norms for serving the liturgy. We are working with the Office of Liturgy to ensure they represent the norms of the global and local Church.
- e. Para 40 - 42 is a revision to the parish employment policy for deacon’s assigned to a parish. The revision has been expanded to make it clear that neither the deacon nor the wife of a deacon may be employed by the parish he is assigned to serve, and that is always inappropriate for a deacon and his wife to be employed by the same parish.
- f. Para 43 has been revised to mirror, in many ways, the priest’s policy on compensation for events and services outside their assigned parish. The policy remains that the deacon’s services within his assigned parish are to be done voluntarily and free of charge or compensation of any kind.
- g. Para 45 is a new paragraph. This policy is primarily to ensure internal transfers are communicated between the deacon, his current pastor, and the receiving pastor as to the reason behind the transfer request, thus lessening the scenarios where a deacon disappears from one parish, only to pop up at another. It is also giving the Office of the Permanent Diaconate the opportunity to counsel and direct the diaconate resources based on the needs of the local Church in preparing the transfer recommendation for the Bishop’s approval/disapproval.

This policy also documents the process for incoming externs (i.e. application and assignments) as well as documenting the process for incardination in the event the current policy of incardination is lifted in the future.

- h. Para 51 - 55 identifies standing appointments to positions and committees for the participation, management and relationship building for the good of the order, formation and life of the diocesan deacons.
7. Para 56 – 60 contain no revisions to the **Ministry and Life After Ordination**.
 8. **Formation** (para 62 – 69). This is a new section that provides details of the formation program from inquiry to ordination. Included in the Manual are the Diaconate Application Standard's to be invited into the formation program (Appendix K) as well as the complete formation syllabus (Appendix J), the diocesan, parish & individual financial commitment for the program, and the post ordination expectations.

We believe this work meets the intent of its governing documents for the proper conditions under which the ministry of the diaconate will be more advantageously regulated and the formation of candidates will be better suited to their different kinds of life, their common obligations and their sacred dignity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF POLICY

I have reviewed the Diaconate Personnel Manual (revised July 1, 2019) and followed the links to review the additional policies described. I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to read and familiarize myself with these policies and procedures as well as those policies on the Diocese of Orlando intranet.

I understand and agree that nothing in this document creates or is intended to create an employment contract or a promise or representation of continued diaconal faculties with the Diocese, which may be temporarily suspended or revoked at any time at the will of either the Diocese or myself, with or without cause or any prior notice or warning.

I understand that any and all policies or practices can be changed at any time by the Diocese, and I recognize that there may be other policies and procedures that are not identified in the manual.

I understand and agree that I will comply with and am fully bound by and subject to each and all of the policies, procedures, rules and/or regulations contained in the Diaconate Personnel Manual or in any subsequent revisions to the manual, and to the referenced Diocesan policies available on the Diocesan Intranet.

My signature below certifies my understanding of the manual, my vocational relationship with the Diocese of Orlando, and the matters set forth in this Acknowledgement.

Name of Deacon/man in formation

Witness Name

Signature of Deacon/man in formation

Witness Signature

_____ Date

Return signed form will be retained in the files of the Office of Permanent Deacons