

Gwynne Lawlor

From: Gwynne Lawlor <gwynne@lawlor.co.za>
Sent: Saturday, January 4, 2014 1:23 PM
To: 'boksburgang@telkomsa.net'
Subject: Deacon's role and duties
Attachments: THE DEACON AT THE EUCHARIST - working document.docx

Dear Fr Tom

I really enjoyed meeting you and getting your input on the above – I know that we did disagree on some points (e.g. dismissing the congregation), but I do acknowledge that you are so well grounded in this area of which I know so little – I value your teaching. Attached is the schedule with the input you have given on the deacon's role and duties in our own Diocese – there may be errors. I also realize that during the course of our discussion I had neglected to make a note of some parts of our discussion. If it is not too much trouble, I would like you to please check for errors in the last column and to add or correct where necessary..

Do you believe that the role of deacon in the church today (Anglican Church specifically) is still relevant? If so, I really would appreciate you telling me how you see the overall role, ministry and responsibilities of the deacon - outside of the liturgical function? I think that this is important to know and to discuss with our clergy in general sometime in the future.

Recently I had contact with a Natal deacon, whose tale of his road to ordination was one of the saddest and most bizarre I have ever heard. I may have told you about it, if so please forgive the repetition. I cannot forget this story, and wonder how common this is.

Many years ago, this man was asked by his priest and fellow parishioners whether he felt called by God to the diaconate – they clearly saw a calling in him. He acknowledged his deep desire to serve the Lord and was encouraged to submit an application to his Diocese, with the full support of his parish priest and members of his parish. He heard nothing after that. In the meantime he registered for a degree in theology (he had taken early retirement from his position as Headmaster of a school). Years passed and he soldiered on, serving his God in his community and studying theology. He qualified with a doctorate in theology and still had heard nothing. In the meantime, parish priests had changed. After 12 years a female priest, working in the Diocese, asked him to assist her. She was clearly curious about him, asked him if he had ever considered ordination. He told her his story. She checked the files in the diocesan office – there was one with his name on it, but it was empty! The upshot of this all was that he was ordained in the shortest possible time in his own parish church and now continues to serve his God and his people..... as a retired deacon. Is his an example of the kind of humility we are called to demonstrate in serving our Lord!?

Maybe – Or was it an honest and tragic mistake on the part of the Diocese? Perhaps. Or could it be an example of what happens these days, a lack of support for all those who seek to serve? From my social work perspective I wonder if this is also a degree of spiritual, emotional and clerical abuse – a lack of caring. I also see it as a terrible waste of resources which could have been used to build up the church. What can we possibly learn from this?

I am still flabbergasted, but know that God's timing is always perfect!

Enjoy the Epiphany of our Lord
Gwynne

THE DEACON AT THE EUCHARIST	ROMAN CATHOLIC	CHURCH OF ENGLAND/ EPISCOPAL/ ANGLICAN	DIOCESE OF THE HIGHVELD
Before the service	Ensures everything is in place. Checks on readers, instructs acolytes, servers, thurifers and ascertains from President or Celebrant specific needs	Ensures everything is in place. Checks on readers, instructs acolytes, servers, thurifers and ascertains from President or Celebrant specific needs	?
At the door of the Church	"Being available when people arrive to learn their needs and fashion intercessions from their concerns."	"Being available when people arrive to learn their needs and fashion intercessions from their concerns."	?
In Introit	Carries gospel in held high, either next to or side by side with the celebrant.	Carries gospel in held high, either next to or side by side with the celebrant.	?
At altar	Kisses the altar as does the celebrant.		?
Synaxis	Leads the faithful into confession.	Leads the faithful into confession	<i>Whole Synaxes is actually the duty of the deacon. -</i>
Gospel	Reads the gospel, starting with the deacons' own greeting of the people: "The Lord be with you" . Signs the gospel with the sign of the cross, forehead, lips and heart. Incenses the gospel. Reads and kisses the gospel on completion. Offers the gospel to the celebrant also.	Approaches celebrant for blessing with the gospel. Processes to where gospel is read. Signs the gospel with the sign of the cross, forehead, lips and heart. Incenses the gospel. Introduces the gospel reading, etc. Returns to the celebrant for celebrant to kiss the gospel reading.	<i>The deacon as the Minister of the Word is responsible for reading the Gospel. How this is done depends on whether this is High Mass, Solemn Mass or ordinary Eucharist. Does not approach the celebrant with the gospel before the reading, unless High Mass and the celebrant is the Bishop, but does after the reading.</i>
Prayers	Offers the prayers of the church.	Offers the prayers of the church.	<i>Deacon's role to offer the prayers of the Church.</i>
Peace	After the celebrant has given the peace, the deacon invites the congregation to share the peace with each other. This is done from the front of the altar.		?

Prepares the table	As is usual. Prays while adding a drop of water to the chalice. (See prayer)	As is usual. Offers water to celebrant to bless. Prays while adding a drop of water to the chalice. (See prayer)	<i>No – the water is not offered to the celebrant to bless.</i>
Incensation	Helps with incensation of the altar. Offers thurible to celebrant, Offers boat and then walks slightly behind the celebrant as he incenses the altar. Or ensures the thurifer does this (local custom?).		<i>At High Mass – yes.</i>
Eucharist	Stands to one side or and a little behind the celebrant. Hands clasped. Does not genuflect, but does bow solemnly.		<i>Bows west – genuflects.</i>
At end of Doxology	Raises chalice when celebrant raises host. (Note: Deacon is proper minister of the chalice).		<i>Does not raise the chalice.</i>
Administration of the Eucharist	Deacon administers the chalice or the ciborium, as requested by the celebrant.		<i>Yes</i>
“Cleaning up”	Collects “fragments”, consumes either alone or together with celebrant. “Washes communion vessels”. (either then or has the server remove them to credence table or side altar and does so later.)		<i>Ablutions - sometimes</i>
Dismissal	After the blessing, the deacon dismisses the congregation.		<i>Given that the presider welcomes the congregation – he/she should also dismiss the congregation.</i>

WORK OF A DEACON	ROMAN CATHOLIC		
Baptism	Yes		<i>No - (note that the APB states that the Deacon may baptize in the absence of a priest).</i>
Funeral Rites	Yes; but more usually committals and services at funeral parlors.		<i>Funeral and memorial services. Yes</i>
Healing		1983 Church of England. A deacon .. is permitted to preside over the ministry of the laying on of hands. If licensed by Bishop may be permitted to anoint with oil (provided this oil has already been consecrated!).	<i>? if specially licensed?</i>
Administering Communion outside the Eucharist	Yes	Yes (Ministry of the Sick)	<i>Yes</i>
Blessing people and artefacts (crosses etc.). !!!!!!!	Yes		<i>No</i>
Other special duties:			
Maundy Thursday	Washing of feet	Washing of feet	<i>?</i>
Good Friday			
Easter Sunday	Carries in Easter candle Sings Exultet	Carries in Easter candle Sings Exultet	<i>Yes</i>