



Deacon's Customary

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Deacon's Customary

This customary has been authorized by the Bishop as a guide for deacons serving in the Diocese of Oklahoma. This customary establishes the protocol to be followed by deacons and priests as it relates to the liturgies and sacraments of the Church.

Deacon's Role in the Eucharist

When a deacon is one of the ministers of the Eucharist, and not the sole Officiant, the deacon should read the Gospel lesson, read the biddings of the Prayers of the People, bid the invitation to Confession and pronounce the Dismissal. Additionally, the deacon should prepare the altar which includes the preparation of the vessels, attending to additional chalices and patens before the administration and may perform or supervise the ablutions.

In addition, the Deacon should stand with the celebrant at the altar and should assist in administering communion. A deacon may assist with the distribution of bread, only if another priest is not available.

When a deacon is administering bread during the Communion and comes to a person who does not receive, it is appropriate for the deacon to place their hand on the person's head or shoulder and say, "The peace of the Lord be always with you," or "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us evermore." No sign of the cross may be made.

If more than one deacon is a minister at the Eucharist, it is appropriate that both be at the altar with the celebrant. However, neither of these deacons, nor any priest or lay person who might stand with the celebrant and deacon at the altar, is to be referred to as the "sub-deacon," a term for an office which no longer exists.

A priest functioning in the deacon's liturgical role is not to wear diaconal vestments and is not to be referred to as a deacon. Nor is it appropriate for lay readers, acolytes, or other laypersons assisting at a service to wear diaconal vestments.

Communion from the Reserved Sacrament-Rite I and II

The Deacon's Administration of Communion from the Reserved Sacrament is not a Eucharist and may only be conducted with the permission of the Bishop or The Canon to the Ordinary.

Administration of Communion from the Reserved Sacrament is a unique service, conducted by the Deacon when a Priest is unavailable, communicating the previously consecrated bread and wine from a previous Eucharist. Accordingly, this service is not to replace a Eucharist but rather to extend a previous one. No similarity to The Great Thanksgiving is intended.

The Deacon emphasizes this distinction by avoiding words and actions that are included in a Eucharist celebrated by a priest. The Deacon does not officiate from behind the

altar, but rather relates to the altar as a layperson would, either kneeling before, beside, or standing to the side of the altar.

General Comments

1. The Deacon needs to ensure that there is Reserved Sacrament available. If Reserved Sacrament is needed, the elements must be consecrated by a priest or Bishop during a service of Holy Eucharist.
2. At celebrations of Communion from the Reserved Sacrament, the Order for Morning or Evening Prayer may be used in place of all that precedes the Offertory. The rubrics for these services referring to "If a Eucharist is to follow," apply to the Deacons' Administration of the Reserved Sacrament as well.
3. The Deacon bids the Confession of Sin.
4. The Deacon says the Absolution (*printed in the BCP*), still kneeling, and substituting "us" for "you" and "our" for "your".
5. The Prayer in the middle of Page 397 (BCP) is said in unison prior to the Lord's Prayer. (*see example on page 6 of this customary*)
6. The Deacon speaks the words "The Gifts of God for the people of God", and may raise the elements or points towards the elements. The deacon may stand behind the altar while extending the invitation.
7. Following the Post Communion Prayer the Deacon proceeds directly to the dismissal. There is no blessing.
8. The Deacon enters the service into the register with the notation "Reserved Sacrament."

Use of Morning and Evening Prayer, Rites I and II, when preceding Communion

1. No Canticle follows the Gospel.
2. Canticles are sung or said standing.
3. If a sermon is given, it is delivered after the Gospel.
4. The Gospel is always included when Communion from the Reserve Sacrament follows Morning or Evening Prayer.
5. The Intercessions are to conform to the directions on BCP page 383.
6. If the service is to be Rite I, the same format is used except using the Rite I language and form where appropriate. The same restrictions and differences

apply. In addition, the deacon may speak the comfortable words prior to the exchange of the peace.

BAPTISM

Holy Baptism is especially appropriate at the Easter Vigil, on the Day of Pentecost, on All Saints' Day or the Sunday after All Saints' Day, and on the Feast of the Baptism of our Lord. It is recommended that, as far as possible, Baptisms be reserved for these occasions or when a priest or bishop is present.

If on any one of the **above-named days** the ministry of a bishop or priest cannot be obtained, the Bishop may specially authorize a deacon to preside. At the Thanksgiving over the water all is read, however the deacon does not touch the water during the prayer. In addition, the deacon omits the prayer over the candidates (page 308) and **does not** perform the Chrismation. The Baptism may be entered into the church Registry, with the notation, "*Baptism by a Deacon.*" *Note: As soon as practical the person baptized should receive Chrismation by a priest or bishop.*

CONFIRMATION

Confirmation is an Episcopal Act. The role of the deacon during the liturgy is determined and under the direction of the Assisting Priest and/or the Bishop.

THE CELEBRATION and BLESSING of a MARRIAGE

A priest or a bishop normally presides at the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage, because such ministers alone have the function of pronouncing the nuptial blessing and preside at the Eucharist.

A deacon **must** obtain the permission of the Bishop in order to officiate at this service. If permitted to officiate by the Bishop, a deacon may use the service outlined in the BCP, omitting the nuptial blessing which follows the Prayers. Additionally, a deacon must be in compliance with the state laws of Oklahoma and the Canons of the Church. The marriage may be entered into the church registry with the notation, "*Marriage by a Deacon.*" Communion from the reserved sacrament is **not** to be used in conjunction with the Celebration of a Marriage by a Deacon.

When assisting a priest at a marriage ceremony, the deacon may deliver the charge, ask for the Declaration of Consent, read the Gospel, and perform assisting functions at the Eucharist.

A THANKSGIVING for the BIRTH or ADOPTION of a CHILD

On occasion the rite might be used in the hospital or home; in other circumstances, it is particularly appropriate for use at the first parish Eucharist a family attends after the birth or adoption of a child.

If a deacon is presiding at the service, a blessing is not given, but rather a prayer offered for the child and the family.

In addition, there are no manual acts made by the deacon (hand over the child, holding child or having the child brought to the altar).

THE RECONCILIATION of a PENITENT

The Reconciliation of a Penitent may not be conducted by a deacon. Absolution may be given only by a priest or bishop.

MINISTRATION to the SICK

Part I of this office may be led by a deacon or a lay person, with the exception of the absolution at the end which can only be given by a priest or bishop. Part II, which consists of the Laying on of Hands and Anointing, should be conducted by a priest or a bishop. However, in case of necessity, a deacon or lay person may anoint with oil blessed by a bishop or priest using the prayer on page 456 of the BCP, *"I lay my hands upon you in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, beseeching him to uphold you and fill you with his grace, that you may know the healing power of his love."*

MINISTRATION at the TIME OF DEATH

A variety of materials are provided in the Book of Common Prayer for use with persons at or near the point of death and those gathered with them. They are intended primarily for use by the "Minister of the Congregation," who should be called at such time, but they may be led by anyone in cases of necessity.

The first prayer is for a person near the point of death. The Litany at the Time of Death is meant for use by those gathered around the dying person. It is followed by two prayers of commendation and the final brief prayer for rest in peace.

The BURIAL of the DEAD: RITE ONE and TWO

A priest normally presides at the service. It is appropriate that the bishop, when present, preside at the Eucharist and pronounce the Commendation. When the service of a priest cannot be obtained, a deacon may preside at the service using the rubrics outlined in the Prayer Book.

If a deacon presides, there is no Eucharist and no blessing of the people offered at the end of the service. In addition, no manual gestures are made during the commendation.

During the prayer of committal, when earth is cast on the coffin (or urn), the deacon does not extend their hand or make a sign of the cross with the dirt.

If the grave is in a place that has not previously been set apart for Christian burial, the Deacon may not consecrate or bless the burial site.

BISHOP'S VISITATIONS and DIOCESAN EUCHARISTS

The rubrics for assisting at the Eucharist apply when the Bishop is the celebrant. The deacon should read the Gospel lesson, read the biddings of the Prayers of the People, bid the invitation to Confession and pronounce the Dismissal. Additionally, the deacon should prepare the altar which includes the preparation of the vessels, attending to additional chalices and patens before the administration and may perform or supervise the ablutions.

The Canon to the Ordinary serves as the Bishop's Chaplain. If The Canon to the Ordinary is not present, a priest, deacon or other person may be asked to serve as Chaplain.

Liturgy of the Word with Deacon's Administration of Communion from Reserved Sacrament: Rite II

Sample Liturgy

Example of those portions of the Liturgy by a Deacon

The Word of God

The Liturgy of the Word is conducted by the Deacon as in the Holy Eucharist except that, after the confession, if said, the Deacon remains kneeling and says:

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. *Amen.*

Announcements may be made

Offertory

An appropriate offertory sentence may be said.

Administration of Communion from Reserved Sacrament by a Deacon

The Deacon does not stand behind the altar except to place the bread on the Paten and wine in the Chalice and when communicating the bread and wine to lay ministers, if present.

Prayer, using the prayer on page 397 (BCP) the

Deacon and People pray, standing or kneeling

Officiant: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Officiant: Let us pray.

Officiant and People:

Almighty Father, whose dear Son, on the night before he suffered, instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood: Mercifully grant that we may receive it thankfully in remembrance of Jesus Christ our Lord, who in these holy mysteries gives us a pledge of eternal life; and who lives and reigns forever and ever. *Amen.*

Then follows the Lord's Prayer:

And now, as our Savior
Christ has taught us,
we are bold to say,

As our Savior Christ
has taught us,
we now pray,

People and Deacon:

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory
are yours,
now and for ever. *Amen.*

The Deacon may elevate or point towards the Sacraments and says:

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

The Deacon delivers the Sacrament in both kinds to the people. It is appropriate for lay minister(s) to assist with the chalice(s).

The Bread and the Cup are given to the communicants with these words:

The Body (Blood) of our Lord Jesus Christ keep you in everlasting life. [*Amen.*]

or with these words:

The Body of Christ, the bread of heaven. [*Amen.*]
The Blood of Christ, the cup of salvation. [*Amen.*]

During the ministration of Communion, hymns, psalms, or anthems may be sung.

After Communion, the Deacon says:

Let us pray.

Deacon and People:

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Eternal God, heavenly Father,
you have graciously accepted us as living members
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,
and you have fed us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.
Send us now into the world in peace,
and grant us strength and courage
to love and serve you
with gladness and singleness of heart;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

or the following:

Almighty and everliving God,
we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food
of the most precious Body and Blood
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ;
and for assuring us in these holy mysteries
that we are living members of the Body of your Son,
and heirs of your eternal kingdom.
And now, Father, send us out
to do the work you have given us to do,
to love and serve you
as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord.
To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

The Deacon may then say: *(no sign of the cross is made, including crossing self)*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore

Closing Hymn

The Deacon dismisses them with these words:

Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

or another of the dismissal sentences may be said.

People: Thanks be to God.

If the service is to be Rite I, the same format is used except using the Rite I language and form where appropriate. The same restrictions and differences apply.

Sources

***The Book of Common Prayer of The Episcopal Church
Prayer Book Rubrics Expanded, Byron D. Stuhlman***

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