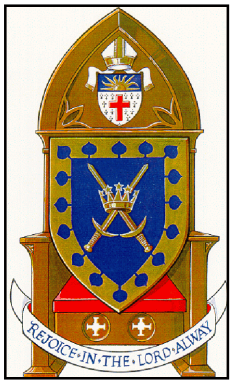
The Diaconate Renewed:
Service, Word and Worship

Canon **D. Michael Jackson**

Deacon at St. Paul's Cathedral, Regina, Saskatchewan
Diocese of Qu'Appelle
Anglican Church of Canada

Revised November 2019



Dedicated to Bishop Duncan Wallace (1938-2015)
Enabler of the Diaconate

The Diaconate Renewed: Service, Word and Worship

Table of Contents

Foreword

The Right Reverend Robert Hardwick, Bishop of Qu'Appelle

I heartily recommend this publication to all deacons, to those discerning a call to ordained ministry, and to every congregation in the Anglican Church of Canada. The 'distinctive diaconate' is a unique calling and I commend this publication for further study that all would be better informed about this ordered ministry.

This publication, and indeed the example set by its author, Deacon Canon Michael Jackson, is a call to the Church to correct the prevailing assumption that the diaconate is merely a transitional year before priesting or an apprenticeship for the priesthood; or that it is only priesthood that really matters.

In a Church of England report, *The Mission and Ministry of the Whole Church*, 2007, it was heartening to read of the missional role of deacons in their communities. As such, the deacon plays a crucial part in calling the Church to engage in its mission and in leading that mission by personal example. It is encouraging to witness this missional call being lived out in its deacons across the Anglican Communion, as it was in the early Church.

Liturgically and missionally, the order of the diaconate is to be commended. This publication goes a long way to help recover this primary and distinctive order.

+ Robert Hardwick
Bishop of Qu'Appelle

Author

Michael Jackson, ordained deacon in the Diocese of Qu'Appelle in 1977, is the longest-serving deacon in the Anglican Church of Canada. He is a canon of the Diocese of Qu'Appelle.

Preface

This study was first prepared in 1997 for the Diocese of Qu'Appelle at the request of Bishop Duncan Wallace. In the following decade, further experience with the order substantially changed perspectives on the diaconate and in 2008 at the request of Bishop Wallace's successor, Bishop Gregory Kerr-Wilson, the study was revised and expanded. Bishop Robert Hardwick suggested that a new edition be done for diocesan website publication in 2014. Ongoing developments and publications on the diaconate in the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Methodist Churches prompted further revisions.

A detailed study of the liturgical role of the deacon is provided in a separate paper, *The Deacon in the Worshipping Community*, also available on the website of the Diocese of Qu'Appelle.

The author is grateful to the late Deacon Ormonde Plater of the Episcopal Church in the USA, distinguished diaconal author and liturgist, for reviewing the text and making many helpful suggestions for its improvement. He also thanks Dr. Brett Salkeld, archdiocesan theologian of the Archdiocese of Regina, for his insights into the diaconate in the Roman Catholic Church; Archdeacon Kyn Barker, Coordinator of Deacons of the Diocese of Toronto, for updates on the diaconal program in that diocese; Deacon Canon Jacquie Bouthéon for liaison with the Association of Anglican Deacons in Canada; and the Rev. Dr. Eileen Scully, Director of Faith, Worship, and Ministry, Anglican Church of Canada, for information on diaconal activity in our national Church. Finally, many thanks to the Right Reverend Robert Hardwick, current Bishop of Qu'Appelle, for contributing the Foreword and thus affirming episcopal support for the diaconate.

This edition is dedicated to Duncan D. Wallace (1938-2015), a deacon-friendly bishop who greatly facilitated the author's diaconate and commissioned the original study in 1997.

Michael Jackson
March 2019

Introduction

> ***… every Christian is called to follow Jesus Christ, serving God the Father, through the power of the Holy Spirit. God now calls you to a special ministry of servanthood, directly under the authority of your bishop. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are to serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely.***
>
> ***As a deacon in the Church, you are to study the holy scriptures, to seek nourishment from them, and to model your life upon them. You are to make Christ and his redemptive love known, by your word and example, to those among whom you live and work and worship. You are to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world. You are to assist the bishop and priests in public worship, and in the ministration of God's word and sacraments, and you are to carry out other duties assigned to you from time to time. At all times, your life and teaching are to show Christ's people that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ himself.*** [1]

The author has been a deacon since 1977. He is the longest-serving – although not the oldest! – deacon in the Anglican Church of Canada. For many years, he was challenged about why he was a deacon: "When are you becoming a real minister?" "When are you being ordained?" "Why are you not going on to the priesthood?" People from non-episcopal churches are baffled by the order of deacons. Within the Anglican Communion (and other Churches), many are ambivalent or sceptical about the diaconate. While Anglicans have paid lip service to the three orders of ordained ministry of bishop, priest or presbyter, and deacon, in practice they have more usually been in the situation described by a preacher at an ordination of (transitional) deacons in the Episcopal Church in the United States:

> [The preacher] knows full well that this person in front of him, now being ordained with such solemnity, will to all intents and purposes have to go through it all again in six months or a year's time to be ordained as a priest. Of course we say, "Once a deacon, always a deacon," but this is pious fiction. The ordination of a deacon, as at present practised, is usually little more than a farce.[2]

The diaconate has been, and can be, far different from this aptly-named "fiction" and "farce." In this study, we trace the order of deacons from its origins and see how it ended up as an apprenticeship to the priesthood; then explore its true purpose, current revival and potential as a unique form of ordained ministry, with major ecumenical implications. Our purpose is to introduce the diaconate to those who may not be familiar with it and to provide helpful information to deacons and diaconal candidates.

Numerous publications have enriched knowledge and understanding of the diaconate, especially in the Episcopal Church of the United States, thanks in large part to the Association for Episcopal Deacons (formerly the North American Association for the Diaconate); in the Church of England and the Scottish Episcopal Church; and in the Roman Catholic Church in the United States. We gratefully acknowledge all those who have contributed to the study of the diaconate and commend their work through the footnotes and bibliography. We hope that this study will be of help to, and stimulate reflection by, present deacons, those contemplating the diaconate, and indeed all interested in the Church's ministry.

---

[1] The Ordination of a Deacon, *The Book of Alternative Services of the Anglican Church of Canada* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1985), 655.

[2] Reginald Fuller, quoted in James M. Barnett, *The Diaconate: A Full and Equal Order*, revised edition (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995), xi.

Chapter I The Diaconate in History

The diaconate is traditionally known as a ministry of service. The biblical Greek word *diakonia*, from which we derive "diaconate" and "deacon," is usually translated as "service," with connotations of humble assistance to others. However, the New Testament scholar John N. Collins has challenged this interpretation on linguistic grounds. *Diakonia* and its cognate words had a much broader sense than "service" in New Testament Greek, also including "ministry," "message," "agency" or "attendant."[3] Similarly, the office of deacon, from the Greek word *diakonos*, has often been misinterpreted, at least since the 19th century, as meaning essentially a servant focusing on charitable work, whereas it originally had wider meanings of (among others) agent, messenger and representative.[4] In any event, the notion of service to others, taken from Jesus' references to himself as a servant and to the ministry of humble service, applies to *all* his followers and not just to one particular ecclesial office; it is a key to the new life, the Kingdom of God. The early Church's fundamental nature was organic, not hierarchical, stressing the oneness of a community where all have both common and particular functions. It is in **baptism** that all Christians are called to ministry and given a charisma which includes service and the other connotations of *diakonia*. A leading deacon in the Episcopal Church in the USA, Susanne Watson Epting, has put it this way: "Even though ordained, our primary identity remains baptismal and our ordination charges and vows serve only to expand, enhance, and urge us on in animating and exemplifying the diakonia to which all the baptized were called."[5] She writes of "the radical equality of baptism."[6]

Diakonia is the calling of all Christians, not just one order of ministers. Symbolizing this, Bishop Rob Hardwick washes the feet of server Gareth Chevalier, St. Paul's Cathedral, Regina, on Maundy Thursday, 2015.

---

[3] Collins examines in detail the linguistic evidence in *Diakonia: Interpreting the Ancient Sources* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990). In *Deacons and the Church: Making connections between old and new* (Leominster: Gracewing; Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2002), he further analyses his findings and applies them to the diaconate. The results of this research are well summarized by Ormonde Plater in *Many Servants: An Introduction to the Diaconate*. Revised Edition (Cambridge, MS: Cowley Publications, 2004), xii-xiii.

[4] Ibidem.

[5] Susanne Watson Epting, "Common Views and Common Mission," *Anglican Theological Review*, Vol. 92, Winter 2010.

[6] Susanne Watson Epting, *Unexpected Consequences: The Diaconate Renewed* (New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2015), 36.

The Origins of the Diaconate

Given this original notion that ministry belonged to the *laos*, to all the baptized in a horizontally-structured church, it took some time for specific orders of ministry to emerge. *Acts* 6: 1-6 recounts how the disciples responded to complaints from the Hellenists that "their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food:" the community appointed "seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom" to handle this task, freeing the disciples to devote themselves "to prayer and to serving the word." The apostles prayed over and laid hands on the seven. Some commentators have read much into this passage, citing it as the origin or at least the forerunner of the diaconate, since the mission of the Seven was the administration of charity in the young church. There is widespread assumption that, as one Roman Catholic archbishop has said, "the first deacon ordinations are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, where the apostles are shown praying and laying hands on seven candidates."[7]

Most scholars, however, agree that the accounts of the ministry of Stephen and Philip in *Acts* and the commissioning of the Seven in *Acts* 6: 1-6 do not refer to a distinct order of deacons, although the Seven exercised some diaconal functions.[8] One such scholar states that "both modern and ancient exegetes do not consider the 'seven' in Acts 6 to have been what were later called 'deacons'."[9] Another comments that "there is not a specific proof-text in Scripture for the establishment of the office of deacon as we understand it today but its distinct role developed in the life of the early Church – and is being discerned anew in the current day." The aforementioned passage in Acts, he says, may well refer to the apostolic ministry of word and eucharist, not literally waiting on table.[10]

While Paul refers to *episcopoi* and *diakonoi* in *Philippians* 1: 1, these terms are often translated as "overseers" and "agents," or "supervisors" and "assistants," as well as "bishops" and "deacons."[11] One scholar has noted that the early Church tended anachronistically to "read into apostolic Church order the fully developed diaconate of the second century." However, "ordering was underway when Paul greeted the *episcopoi* and *diakonoi* at Philippi;" the role of Epaphroditus (*Philippians* 2: 25-30) shows the emergence of the diaconal function.[12] In I *Corinthians* 12: 4-11 and 27-31, we note the variety of ministries, not necessarily permanent and not always formally commissioned.

The consensus of scholars is that in the Pauline churches of the early New Testament period there was no uniform structure of offices. However, the roots were there, and formal ministry was taking shape; by the time of I *Timothy* and the later New Testament church we find more consistent references to orders of ministry. I *Timothy* 3: 1-7 lists the qualifications of bishops. Verses 8-13 describe those of deacons: "Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for money; they must hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience." This passage includes a verse about possible women deacons: "Women must likewise be serious, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things." I *Timothy*'s reference to presbyters, on the other hand, is cursory: "do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders" (4: 14).

---

[7] José H. Gomez, Archbishop of Los Angeles, "Foreword," in James Keating, *The Heart of the Diaconate: Communion with the Servant Mysteries of Christ* (New York: Paulist Press, 2015), ix.

[8] Barnett, 33. See also Collins, *Deacons and the Church*, 47-50, 87-89, and Plater, *Many Servants*, 11-12.

[9] Cipriano Vagaggini, *Ordination of Women to the Diaconate in the Eastern Churches*, edited by Phyllis Zagano (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2013), 10

[10] Scott M. Carl, "From Being with Jesus to Proclaiming the Word," in James Keating, ed., *The Character of the Deacon: Spiritual and Pastoral Foundations* (New York: Paulist Press, 2017), 4.

[11] See Collins, *Diakonia*, 235-236, and Plater, *Many Servants*, 11.

[12] Edward P. Echlin, S.J., *The Deacon in the Church, Past and Future* (New York: Alba House, 1971), 5, 9, 10.

One theory is that the offices of bishop and deacon originated in the Pauline or Hellenic churches, while that of presbyter or elder originated in the Judaistic churches, especially in Jerusalem. The two systems gradually link up and by the end of the first century a synthesis into three orders is more or less complete. Bishops are overseers and liturgical presiders, in conjunction with presbyters or elders, who form a governing council. Deacons work closely with the bishop, act as episcopal agents, and have special responsibilities in pastoral, charitable, administrative work and the liturgy. Writers at the end of the first century, such as the authors of the *Didache* and *The Shepherd of Hermas* and Clement of Rome, refer to the link between bishop and deacon and to the liturgical role of the deacon.

In the post-apostolic or "Ignatian" era, the "mono-episcopate" emerges, the "rule of the local church by a council of presbyters [...] over which one bishop presides."[13] St. Ignatius of Antioch refers in his letters written at the beginning of the second century to fully-developed orders of bishop, presbyter and deacon. "[Deacons] are seen [by St. Ignatius] to have as integral a part in the ministry as the bishop and the presbyters: they are not an optional extra, but are mentioned first."[14] Deacons are officers or functionaries of the Church community, ministers of liturgy, word, charity and administration. Their direct association with the bishop is clear to Ignatius: "their *diakonia* is to carry out the will of the bishop."[15] So is their liturgical role; for Ignatius, they are "deacons of the mysteries of Christ" at the eucharistic celebration[16] – a role identified even more specifically in the writings of another second century writer, Justin Martyr: "After the president has given thanks and all the people have shouted their assent, those whom we call deacons give to each one present to partake of the eucharistic bread; and to those who are absent they carry away a portion."[17]

The Diaconate Flourishes

In the two centuries from the time of Ignatius to the Council of Nicaea, deacons are "vitally important ministers of the Church,"[18] a complementary order, not a subordinate one. People are ordained directly to the episcopate, the presbyterate or the diaconate, with all three seen as permanent. The deacon's special relationship with the bishop is symbolized in the diaconal ordination rite where the bishop alone lays hands on the ordinand, whereas the college of priests join the bishop in the laying-on of hands for the presbyterate. The *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus (Rome, c. 215) notes that "on ordaining the deacon, the bishop alone lays hands, because he is ordained not to the priesthood but to the ministry of the bishop, to carry out commands. He does not take part in the council of the clergy, but attends to duties and makes known to the bishop what is necessary…"[19] The *Didascalia* of the Apostles (c. 250), a pastoral handbook for bishops, compares bishops to the high priests of Old Testament times, priests to Old Testament priests, and deacons to Levites.

Deacons have a major liturgical role and administrative and charitable duties. They act as administrative assistants to the bishop. They baptize. They have clear functions in the Eucharist. They are even known – though rarely – to have presided at eucharistic celebrations.[20] They are ministers of charity, ministers to the sick and the aged. They may reconcile penitents. But, though

---

[13] Barnett, 49.

[14] Jill Pinnock, "The History of the Diaconate," in Christine Hall, ed., *The Deacon's Ministry* (Leominster: Gracewing, 1992), 12.

[15] Collins, *Deacons and the Church*, 106.

[16] Ibid., 108.

[17] Quoted in Plater, *Many Servants*, 18-19.

[18] Echlin, 29.

[19] Ormonde Plater, ed., *Historic Documents on the Diaconate* (Providence, RI: North American Association for the Diaconate, revised 1999), 1.

[20] Echlin speculates that Ignatius may on occasion have delegated eucharistic presidency to deacons (*The Deacon in the Church*, 22) and observes that the Council of Arles in 314 directed that the practice cease.

ministers of the "Word," they do not normally preach.[21] They are sometimes placed in charge of small congregations. Some are elected bishops. "The third century was a period in which the dignity and importance of the deacon increased at the expense of the presbyter. Perhaps the climax is recorded in the *Didascalia*, where the deacon usually takes precedence over the presbyter."[22] The following description of ministry in the early Church shows the relatively low profile of presbyters compared to deacons:

> …the bishop is responsible for seeing to it that the congregation develops and grows and that the presbyters form with him a ruling group assisted by the deacons. At the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist, the local bishop inevitably presides, the deacons fulfilling their roles too […] But it is the presbyters, who are by far the commonest in today's Church, who do not appear to "do" very much, apart from sitting there as elders.[23]

The Diaconate – Ministry Open to Women?[24]

In *Romans* 16:1, Paul refers to "our sister Phoebe" as a *diakanos*. There is, again, debate as to whether this refers to a deacon as the office as later understood. Origen (185-255) asserted that "this text teaches with the authority of the Apostle that even women are instituted deacons in the Church".[25] St. John Chrysostom (4th century) considered Phoebe to be a deacon.[26] Collins prefers to translate the word here as "delegate."[27] Nonetheless, indications are that women were officially commissioned for *diakonia* and when the office of deacon later emerged, it appears to have been open to women. According to Collins, in I *Timothy* 3: 11 there is a "seemingly clear case to be made for the inclusion of women among the deacons."[28] Kevin Madigan and Carolyn Osiek note that "the earliest reference to a female deacon occurs in the Pauline letters, Phoebe in Rom 16:1. At this point, there is no distinction by sex."[29] There is considerable evidence to show that women are ordained deacons in the third through the seventh centuries; beyond that in the East, especially in Constantinople, as late as the 12th century; in Syria and Greece; but also in Gaul and possibly even Rome. The *Didascalia* explains the role of the female deacon for ministry among women, such as in baptisms and house visits:

> The woman deacon should be honored by you as [the presence of] the Holy Spirit […] Choose some people who most please you and institute them as deacon: a man for the administration of the many necessary tasks, but also a woman for ministry among women […] You need the ministry of women deacons for many reasons.[30]

---

[21] See Barnett, 80-83, who challenges the assertion of Echlin that deacons exercised a preaching ministry (76, 88, 103, 106).

[22] Barnett,71.

[23] Kenneth Stevenson, *The First Rites: Worship in the Early Church* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1989), 74-75.

[24] The history of women deacons is summarized in Ormonde Plater, *Many Servants*, 21-27. See also Christine Hall, ed., *The Deacon's Ministry,* particularly Jill Pinnock, "The History of the Diaconate," 14-21, and Kyriaki Fitzgerald, "A Commentary on the Diaconate in the Contemporary Orthodox Church," 147-158; Edward Echlin, SJ, *The Deacon in the Church*, 62, 73; and Kyriaki Fitzgerald, *Women Deacons in the Orthodox Church: Called to Holiness and Ministry* (Brookline, MS: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1998).

[25] John Winjgaards, *Women Deacons in the Early Church: Historical Texts and Contemporary Debates* (Norwich: Canterbury Press; New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2002), 149.

[26] Kevin Madigan and Carolyn Osiek, eds. & translators, *Ordained Women in the Early Church: A Documentary History (*Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 15.

[27] Collins, *Deacons and the Church*, 73-75, 90.

[28] Collins, 99; see also Plater, 12. Some writers believe that the reference in this verse is to deacons' wives But Madigan and Osiek, citing again St. John Chrysostom, give more weight to evidence that the reference is to female deacons (*Ordained Women in the Early Church*, 18-21).

[29] 203.

[30] Winjgaards, *Women Deacons in the Early Church*, 151-152.

The *Apostolic Constitutions* of the late fourth century in Syria, which incorporate the *Didascalia*, expand the references to female deacons.[31] But the practice was not universal and some parts of the church, notably in the West and Egypt, were opposed to deaconesses. There has been disagreement among theologians as to whether these women were actually deacons. Some believe that they were not: commenting on the *Didascalia,* historian Aimé Georges Martimort argued that "deaconesses took no part in the liturgy […] In no way could they be considered on the same level as deacons: they were their auxiliaries."[32] Yet while early women deacons had a more restricted liturgical role than their male counterparts (they anointed females candidates for baptism for reasons of modesty, but did not actually baptize and did not serve at the Eucharist), other scholars maintain that they were indeed deacons, with a different role from male deacons. Roman Catholic scholar Cipriano Vagaggini asserted that for the author of *Didascalia* "this diaconal ministry in the church includes two branches: one male and one female," even if the "duties of the deaconess are restricted to ministry for women."[33] And when adult baptism gave way in the majority of cases to infant baptism, women deacons still continued their ministry – "there was more to their role than that."[34]

German theologian and bishop Gerhard Müller maintained that deaconesses held appointed offices like sub-deacons and lectors and were not sacramentally ordained.[35] Others suggest that they received a form of ordination for a separate order of deaconesses but were not considered deacons. Still others argue that deaconesses were indeed female deacons. The latter view now seems to be the most widely accepted.[36] Cipriano Vagaggini, in his careful examination of the evidence, concludes that women deacons were sacramentally ordained with episcopal laying-on of hands like their male counterparts (and like presbyters), rather than being blessed like sub-deacons and other minor orders. "Deaconesses," he affirms, "are clearly part of the clergy."[37] Indeed, the *Apostolic Constitutions* cite a prayer for episcopal ordination of a woman deacon which is a direct counterpart of that in the ordination of a male deacon.[38] Unlike candidates for minor orders, they were ordained before the altar inside the sanctuary. They received the diaconal stole, or *orarion*. And they received the chalice from the bishop after the ordination.[39] Roman Catholic liturgical scholar Roger Gryson, differing with Martimort (and later with Müller), asserts "that women were ordained to and ministered within the order of deacons."[40]

Kevin Madigan and Carolyn Osiek conclude that

> By the third century, the special office of female deacon or deaconess had developed in the East, intended especially for ministry to women. It is clear that in most churches that reflected this custom in the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries, **the deaconess was considered**

---

[31] See Madison and Osiek, *Ordained Women in the Early Church,* 106-116.

[32] Aimé Georges Martimort, *Deaconesses: An Historical Study* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 43. However, Cipriano Vagaggini and John Winjgaards effectivey rebut Martimort's arguments.

[33] *Ordination of Women to the Diaconate in the Eastern Churches*, 14.

[34] Madison and Osiek, *Ordained Women in the Early Church*, 205.

[35] Gerhard Müller, *Priesthood and Diaconate* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002), 204 ff.

[36] For a summary of these points of view, see Kenan B. Osborne, O.F.M., *The Permanent Diaconate: Its History and Place in the Sacrament of Orders* (New York: Paulist Press, 2007), 170-174. Owen F. Cummings gives a less positive view of women deacons in *Deacons and the Church* (New York: Paulist Press, 2004), 42-43.

[37] See "The Ordination of Deaconesses in the Greek and Byzantine Tradition," *Ordination of Women to the Diaconate in the Eastern Churches*, 34.

[38] Madison and Osiek, *Ordained Women in the Early Church*, 113-114.

[39] Vagaggini, 53-55.

[40] *The Ministry of Women in the Early Church* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1976), cited by Phyllis Zagano in Vagaggini, *Ordination of Women to the Diaconate in the Eastern Churches*, x.

> **an ordained member of the clergy with special tasks** [our emphasis]. [..] for some tasks (e.g. representation of the church in business or political contexts), their roles overlapped with the male deacons.[41]

These female ministers are referred to as diakonissa in the canons of the Council of Nicaea (325). But the terms "deacon" (diakonos) and "deaconess" (diakonissa) are often used concurrently or interchangeably for female deacons.[42] St. Basil of Caesarea (329-379), St. John Chrysostom (344-407) and St. Gregory of Nyssa (335-394) refer to women deacons.[43] The Council of Chalcedon (451) promulgates a canon regulating the ordination of deaconesses, who must be over forty years of age. The code of the Emperor Justinian I (529-564) includes a number of rules governing the ordination and discipline of women deacons. Indeed, Vagaggini tells us, "from Justinian (527-565) to Heraclius (610-640) the Great Church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople had forty deaconesses."[44] The Council of Trullo (692) reiterates the Chalcedonian rule of ordination of women deacons after age forty. A number of manuscripts dated between the eighth and fourteenth centuries reproduce ordination rites for women deacons.[45] They function liturgically and pastorally in parallel with their male counterparts. A leading Orthodox scholar, Kyriaki FitzGerald, records the sacramental ordination of women to the diaconate in various parts of the East, even during the Middle Ages, especially in monasteries.

The Decline of the Diaconate

Starting from the fourth century, things changed. In the post-Constantinian era, with tolerance, equality, and eventually official status for Christianity, the three orders of ministers underwent a radical transformation. Dioceses emerged and bishops presided over them instead of over local churches; presbyters replaced bishops in that role and at last gained the right to preside at the Eucharist. In other words, bishops and presbyters switched functions so that bishops governed and presbyters presided. Deacons moved from assisting the bishop to assisting presbyters and lost their influence. The Council of Nicaea (325) reflected a growing sacerdotalism, concurrent with a decline in the prestige of the diaconate. By the next century, St. Jerome (d 419) considered the diaconate "inferior" to the presbyterate. Furthermore, the church adopted the model of governance of the Roman Empire: the cursus honorum, a passage up the hierarchical ladder from one grade to another – and on that ladder the diaconate became classified as the lowest of three rungs. It actually took several centuries before ordination in succession to the diaconate, then the presbyterate, then the episcopate, became generalized into what we now know as "sequential" ordination. After the tenth century, however, the organic notion of the body of Christ was effectively replaced by clericalism and hierarchy and the diaconate ended up as a pro forma transition period to the priesthood. "The role of the deacon on the eve of the reformation was subordinate, temporary, and almost entirely liturgical."[46]

At the time of the Reformation, the Church of England emphatically proclaimed its intent to maintain the three-fold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons, on the rationale that

> It is euident unto all men, diligently readinge holye scripture, and auncient aucthours, that fro the Apostles tyme, there hathe bene these orders of Ministers in Christes church, Bisshoppes, Priestes, and Deacons…[47]

---

[41] Madison and Osiek, *Ordained Women in the Early Church*, 203.
[42] Ibid., 8, 203.
[43] Winjgaards, *Women Deacons in the Early Church*, 156-158.
[44] *Ordination of Women to the Diaconate in the Eastern Churches*, 43.
[45] Winjgaards, 167-188.
[46] Echlin, 91.
[47] *The First and Second Prayer Books of King Edward the Sixth* (London & Toronto: J.M. Dent; New York: E.P. Dutton, Everyman's Library 448, 1927), 292.

Indeed it did maintain them, but, alas, still clinging to the mediaeval concept that the diaconate was transitional, a mere stepping-stone to the "full" ministry – the priesthood. This is bluntly summed up in the ordinal of 1550, added to the First Prayer Book of King Edward VI (1549). The rite for the making of deacons concludes with a post-communion prayer, based on a prayer in the Sarum Pontifical, asking that those just ordained "may so wel use themselues in thys inferior offyce, that they may be found worthi to be called unto the higher ministeries in thy Church."[48] There were exceptions. Leo the Great (440) and Gregory the Great (590) were in deacon's orders when elected to the papacy; so was the eleventh century archdeacon Hildebrand. The Venerable Bede was a deacon for eleven years. Alcuin, the great English scholar in the eighth century, was a deacon, as were St. Francis of Assisi in the thirteenth century and Cardinal Reginald Pole in the fifteenth. Nicholas Ferrar, who led the experimental Christian commune at Little Gidding in seventeenth century England, was a deacon. Charles Dodgson, better known as Lewis Carroll, author of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), was also a deacon. But they were rare exceptions. In the Western Church, although not in the Orthodox East, deacons were relegated to the side-lines. And this was to be their fate for over a thousand years.

By the mid-20th century, the diaconate was almost invisible. Transitional deacons, apprentice priests in their parishes or sometimes in their last year of seminary, for a few months or a year wore priest's stoles crossways, administered the chalice at communion – and, if their priests were liturgically aware enough, might be allowed to read the Gospel. Their sights were firmly set on the "real" ordination, the one for professional ministry: the priesthood. Anglican parishes of a more catholic persuasion needed deacons (and sub-deacons) for a Solemn Eucharist or "high mass"; if they couldn't find a real deacon, they dressed up a priest to look like one (this regrettable practice still continues, as does another, equally regrettable, practice of vesting a lay person as a "liturgical deacon"). The Canadian Prayer Book of 1959, a very conservative revision of the traditional *Book of Common Prayer*, unfortunately timed just when real liturgical reform was beginning, reflects the old assumptions about the diaconate. In its eucharistic rite, for example, the reference to "the Deacon or Priest who reads [the Gospel]" is the sum total of the deacon's role in the service.

Chapter II The Revival of the Diaconate

Two factors helped to resuscitate the moribund order of deacons. The first was the growing, ecumenical influence of the liturgical movement, which liberated Christian worship from the solo domination of the priest or pastor and brought into play the active participation of the entire community. For Anglicans, it meant going beyond the passive, reactive stance assumed for the congregation in *The Book of Common Prayer*. Here was fertile ground for the ancient liturgical role of the deacon. The other factor was the changing understanding of ordination, from a clerical caste which does things on behalf of the remainder of the Church to persons "to whom the community has entrusted a practical and symbolic leadership role." In this view, as Deacon Maylanne Maybee expresses it,

> [B]ishops give symbolic focus and practical leadership to the apostolic Church in areas relating to oversight, unity, tradition, catholicism, and ecumenism. Presbyters give symbolic focus and practical leadership to the local, gathered Church in its life of worship, fellowship, and reconciliation. In the same way, deacons are needed to give symbolic focus to the "sent forth" Church in its mission of service, proclamation, peace, and justice-making.[49]

---

[48] Ibid., 302.

[49] Maylanne Maybee, "The State of the Diaconate in the Anglican Church of Canada," in Richard Leggett, ed., *A Companion to the Waterloo Declaration. Commentary and Essays on Lutheran-Anglican Relations in Canada* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1999), 104-105.

Of course, neither of these factors was "new." The full participation of the worshipping community and the symbolic role of ordained ministers within that community were practices of the ancient Church in which the diaconate had thrived. The recovery of these practices set the stage for, among other things, the return of the deacon.

At first, there were several inconclusive efforts to renew the diaconate. For example, in the 1950s there were a number of "perpetual deacons," especially in the Episcopal Church in the United States. They usually functioned as unpaid curates, their duties ranging from genuine pastoral work to merely administering a chalice at communion. Some used this as a back door to the priesthood at a time of shortage of clergy. The real stimulus to the revival of the order of deacons was the Second Vatican Council, which, through the Constitution of the Church, *Lumen Gentium,* promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1964, approved the restoration of the diaconate in the Roman Catholic Church as a permanent vocation, open to married men. The *motu proprio* of Paul VI in 1967, *Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem*, effectively revived the diaconate in the Latin West after a slumber of a millennium. By 1999 there were over 27,600 deacons in the Roman Catholic Church world-wide. In 2014, the Roman Catholic Church in the United States reported having some 18,700 deacons, of whom 93% were married.[50] The Archdiocese of Los Angeles, the largest in the country, had "nearly four hundred permanent deacons serving in parishes, schools, and a diverse array of ministries and leadership positions."[51]

The Anglican Communion and the Episcopal Church

In the Anglican Communion, the Lambeth Conference as early as 1958 made a tentative approach to renewing the diaconate:

> The Conference recommends that each province of the Anglican Communion shall consider whether the office of Deacon shall be restored to its primitive place as a distinctive order in the Church, instead of being regarded as a probationary period for the priesthood.[52]

Lambeth 1968, while advising retention of the transitional diaconate, took a strong stand in favour of the distinctive diaconate:

> The Conference recommends […that] the diaconate, combining service of others with liturgical functions, be open to (i) men and women remaining in secular occupations (ii) full-time church workers (iii) those selected for the priesthood.[53]

In 1978 Lambeth urged the churches to ordain women deacons and in 1988 continued the momentum:

> We need to recover the diaconate as an order complementary to the order of priesthood rather than as a merely transitional order which it is at present. We should ensure that such a diaconate does not threaten the ministry of the laity but seeks to equip and further it. Such a diaconate, furthermore, would serve to renew the diakonia of the whole Church: laity, deacons, priests and bishops.[54]

The Episcopal Church in the United States paid early and serious attention to the diaconate. A Center for the Diaconate was founded in 1974. It was succeeded in 1986 by the North American Association for the Diaconate (NAAD), called since 2010 the Association for Episcopal Deacons, or AED. It

---

[50] *A Portrait of the Permanent Diaconate: A Report for the US Conference of Catholic Bishops*, 2013-2014 (Center for Applied Research on the Apostolate, Georgetown University, May 2014).

[51] José H. Gomez, Archbishop of Los Angeles, "Foreword," in James Keating, *The Heart of the Diaconate*, ix.

[52] Plater, *Historic Documents on the Diaconate*, 5.

[53] Ibidem.

[54] Ibid., 8.

actively promoted the order through education, publicity and fellowship among deacons. Its conferences and impressive list of publications had a major influence on the renewal of the diaconate in the U.S.A. and eventually in Canada and elsewhere in the Anglican Communion. In the light of these developments, the 1998 Lambeth Conference sent a positive message on the diaconate:

> Where deacons exercise their special ministry in the Church, they do so by illuminating and holding up the servant ministry of the whole Church and calling its members to that ministry […] The re-establishment of the diaconate […] liberates bishops and presbyters to exercise their complementary and distinctive tasks.[55]

Episcopal deacon Susanne Watson Epting, a former director of the Association for Episcopal Deacons, identifies seven "waves" in the development of the diaconate in the Episcopal Church, starting with missionary or indigenous deacons in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the deaconesses of 1885-1970, then perpetual deacons, the rediscovery and definition of the vocational diaconate in the 1970s and 1980s, through to "integration" and focusing on baptismal *diakonia* in the twenty-first century. Quoting a mentor of hers, she notes that "it is no small thing that the renewal of the diaconate and the renewed understanding of baptism occurred at the same time."[56] By 2017, there were 3,000 deacons in the Episcopal Church, with over two hundred more in formation.

Ambivalence in the Church of England

However, support in the Anglican Communion for the renewed diaconate has been far from unanimous. A report for the Church of England published in 1974 (just when the Episcopal Church's Center for the Diaconate was established) actually recommended abolition of the diaconate, on the grounds that it had no exclusive functions and would interfere with lay ministry.[57] Discussions on the diaconate in the Church of England have always had to take into account the strength of the order of lay readers. This negative attitude was reflected in the 1980 *Alternative Service Book* of the Church of England, where deacons are almost invisible: there is no mention of the deacon reading the Gospel or giving the Dismissal, even in the contemporary eucharistic rites. The 1974 recommendation went nowhere – fortunately.

The Church of England finally admitted women to the diaconate in 1987, but many of the new deacons were women waiting for the Church of England to accept women priests, which it did in 1994. The vocational diaconate did not seem to have taken hold. This is evident in the 2000 *Book of Common Worship* of the Church of England, where references to deacons are almost as rare as in the *Alternative Service Book* published twenty years earlier. The 2000 Book grudgingly allows that "in some traditions the ministry of the deacon at Holy Communion has included some of the following elements," such as reading the Gospel, intercessions and preparation of the table. It goes on to say that "the deacon's liturgical ministry provides an appropriate model for the ministry of an assisting priest, a Reader, or another episcopally authorized minister…" Reflecting the C of E's preoccupation with lay readers, the Book adds that the president may "delegate the leadership of all or parts of the Gathering and the Liturgy of the Word to a deacon, Reader or other authorized lay person."[58] This is hardly a ringing endorsement of the diaconate in the Church of England!

---

[55] "The Diaconate as a Distinct Order of Ministry," in *The Official Report of the Lambeth Conference, 1998* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1999), 203.

[56] Susan Watson Epting, *Unexpected Consequences: The Diaconate Renewed*, 14.

[57] *Deacons in the Church*, Church of England ACCM Working Party (London: CIO, 1974).

[58] *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England* (London: Church House Publishing, 2000), 158-159.

In a fascinating 2015 book, *Inferior Office? A History of Deacons in the Church of England*,[59] Cambridge scholar Francis Young tells the story of deacons in the Church of England since the sixteenth century, examines their situation today, and sums up the arguments for and against the distinctive diaconate. He contrasts the C of E's lacklustre response to the diaconate with the revival of the order in other provinces of the Anglican Communion, in the Roman Catholic Church, and to some extent in Lutheranism. By the early part of the twenty-first century, there were fewer than a hundred distinctive deacons in the entire Church of England, in sharp contrast with the Anglican Church of Canada (400 deacons in 2018) and the Episcopal Church in the USA (3,000 deacons in 2018).

However, a seminal study in 2001 by a Working Party of the House of Bishops, *For such a time as this – a renewed diaconate in the Church of England*, argued that "there is distinctive but not exclusive ministry for a renewed diaconate."[60] The Dioceses of Portsmouth and Salisbury actively promoted the diaconate. In 2003 the latter diocese issued its own report, *The Distinctive Diaconate*, which set out a plan, both theoretical and practical, for implementing the vision of the 2001 report.[61] In 2007, another Church of England study, *The Mission and Ministry of the Whole Church*, called for the diaconate to be taken more seriously: its theological framework was already in place but "has gone largely unrecognized;" the distinctive diaconate should be encouraged, especially for some lay Readers; and the transitional diaconate should be extended beyond a year.[62] Yet despite these positive studies the vocational diaconate made little headway in the Church of England. The reasons appear to be as follows:

- The diaconate primarily provided a form of ordained ministry for women from 1987 (replacing the order of deaconesses) until they were admitted to the priesthood in 1994. Few men opted for the diaconate.

- As noted above, the powerful institution of lay readers has been a major factor in discouraging the diaconate in England, on the grounds that (a) it goes counter to the empowerment of the laity, notably in worship, and (b) deacons are redundant because lay readers can fulfil the same functions. Vigorous opposition from lay readers stymied the reception of *At Such a Time as This* at the General Synod in 2001.

- Prevailing opinion in the Church of England firmly adheres to the doctrine of cumulative ordination. Presbyters and bishops are "another group of deacons" and you don't need "distinctive deacons to represent the diaconate." Even those favourable to the distinctive diaconate advocate a longer and more meaningful transitional diaconate. The notion of direct or *per saltum* ordination to the priesthood and abolition of the transitional diaconate, discussed in North America among Anglicans and Roman Catholics, gains absolutely no traction in the Church of England.

---

59 Francis Young. *Inferior Office? A History of Deacons in the Church of England* (Cambridge: James Clark & Co., 2015).

60 *For such a time as this – a renewed diaconate in the Church of England*, Working Party of the House of Bishops, Church of England (London: Church House Publishing, 2001), Chapter 7.

61 *The Distinctive Diaconate: A Report to the Board of Ministry, The Diocese of Salisbury* (Salisbury: Sarum College Press, 2003).

62 *The Mission and Ministry of the Whole Church: Biblical, theological and contemporary perspectives* (London: General Synod, 2007); quoted in the *Church Times*, 31 August 2007.

Interest in the Scottish Episcopal Church

The Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) has shown much more interest in the diaconate than its sister-church in England. In the 1980s, several studies and reports supported the idea of vocational deacons, notably *Truly Called by God to Serve as a Deacon*, The Report of the Bishops' Working Group on Distinctive Diaconate, in 1987.[63] However, in the words of a second major report by the SEC in 2012, T*ruly Called…Two*, as in England, "the diaconate enjoyed what now seems like a false dawn in the late 1980s when many women were ordained Deacon […] but it turned out to be only as a transitional phase prior to most of those women going on to ordination as Priests".[64]

The latter report was the outcome of a diaconal working group which liaised with the provincial director of ordinands to produce a set of specific criteria for the discernment of diaconal vocations and formational outcomes for the various stages of training. This was done in close touch with Porvoo Communion Lutheran partners, looking at the similarities and differences of the diaconate in the two Communions (we will look at the Porvoo Agreement later). Says Canon Anne Tomlinson, a leading Scottish deacon and principal of the Scottish Episcopal Institute, "We are noticing a resurgence in interest in the diaconal vocation as the Scottish Episcopal Church becomes ever more missional and outward-facing."[65]

Evolution in Canada

In the Anglican Church of Canada, a first wave of ordinations for the distinctive diaconate occurred in the 1970s, when some dioceses in the ecclesiastical Provinces of Rupert's Land (Rupert's Land, Brandon and Qu'Appelle) and British Columbia (New Westminster, Caledonia, Cariboo, and Kootenay) established diaconal programs. The Province of Ontario considered the idea but ended up instead with a moratorium on the vocational diaconate, which meant the bishops would only ordain transitional deacons. There was no activity at all in the Province of Canada (Quebec and east). However, the programs in western Canada faltered after the first few years. In some cases a change in episcopal leadership resulted in a reluctance or even refusal to ordain more deacons. Some supposedly vocational deacons were ordained to the priesthood, undercutting the rationale for the vocational diaconate and renewing suspicion that it was a back door to the priesthood.

Fortunately, attitudes changed. The 1986 General Synod recommended that "the renewal of the diaconate as an order with an integrity of its own be considered in the context of … the baptismal ministry of the whole people of God."[66] The 1989 General Synod approved guidelines for the restoration of a distinctive diaconate and a second wave of ordinations began in the 1990s. The Ontario bishops reversed direction and the Diocese of Toronto in particular launched an active program for deacons. The Province of Canada did the same after 1996 and diaconal programs began in the dioceses of Montreal, Eastern Newfoundland & Labrador, and Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island. In the Province of British Columbia &Yukon, diaconal programs recovered their momentum; by 2000, the Diocese of New Westminster had the fastest-growing program in Canada.

However, Rupert's Land province, a leader in the diaconate in the 1970s, subsequently backed off, despite a favourable report on the diaconate by its committee on ministry in the late 1980s. By the end of the 1990s, no diocese in the province had an active diaconal program and the only vocational deacons were those remaining from the first wave of ordinations in the 1970s and 80s. Of the three dioceses in the civil Province of Saskatchewan, only Qu'Appelle explored the distinctive diaconate.

---

[63] Edinburgh: General Synod Office, 1987.
[64] Edinburgh: General Synod Office, 2012, 5.
[65] Canon Anne Tomlinson, email, 23 August 2016.
[66] *A Plan to Restore the Diaconate in the Anglican Church of Canada*. General Synod Committee on Ministry (Toronto: Anglic.an Church of Canada, 1989), 4.

In the 1970s, several men and women had been ordained deacons, including the author. In the 1980s, however, there was no consistent follow-up or policy on the diaconate in the diocese. Some candidates, specifically ordained for the vocational diaconate, became priests a few years later, and this effectively put an end to the program in the diocese. In the 1990s, when Qu'Appelle was at the leading edge of locally-ordained ministry, its official material at first only referred to priests. The option of ordination as deacon was added later to the documentation on the program, but only theoretically, for there was no real encouragement to pursue the diaconate.

It is hardly a surprise that no candidates came forward until 2000. When they did, however, it was with an enthusiasm and commitment which obliged the diocese to seriously re-examine a form of ordained ministry it had virtually allowed to lapse for twenty years. The diaconal program was revived and a number of women and men were ordained deacons in Qu'Appelle between 2001 and 2014. But the regrettable practice continued of accepting some candidates for the diaconate and then subsequently treating this as transitional period for the priesthood. In 2015, the diocese reviewed this practice and appointed a ministry development officer, one of whose roles was to create distinct lay, presbyteral and diaconal streams of education and training for non-stipendiary ministry.

With the benefit of hindsight, we can see that the first wave of programs for a distinctive diaconate in Canada in the 1970s and early 1980s lacked depth and sustainability. They were launched, with commendable enthusiasm, when the diaconal movement was spreading in the Anglican Communion, partly on the impetus of Vatican II. But too often they were *ad hoc* in nature, were overly dependent on the interest, or lack thereof, of individual bishops, and did not benefit from coherent formation programs. There was insufficient education in the parishes about the purpose of the diaconate and frequently a lack of support and understanding from the presbyterate. Often deacons were viewed – and on occasion viewed themselves – as clerical assistants in parishes rather than as ministers of service linking the church with the world. As a result, many deacons ordained in the "first wave" found themselves isolated, relegated to an exceptional or experimental status instead of being seen as prototypes for a renewed and expanding form of ministry.

The second wave of diaconal programs, dating from the mid-1990s, was much more coherent and grounded in a solid theology of baptism and ordination. Canadian deacons, and the Anglican Church of Canada at large, had learned from the example of diaconate in the Episcopal Church (and in the Roman Catholic Church) and had benefited for twenty years from the informational and educational programs of NAAD (now AED). Canadian bishops looked with renewed interest at the diaconate and, when they began diaconal programs, usually did so based on wide consultation and employing a careful process of discernment, selection, formation and training, as well as systematic follow-up after ordination.

In 1999, fifteen Canadian deacons attended the biennial conference of NAAD in Northfield, Minnesota, where they decided that a meeting of Canadian deacons should be convened the following year. In 2000, this historic, first-ever conference of Canadian deacons met in Winnipeg. Forty were present, one-third of the 120 deacons then known in Canada. Reflecting the vigour of the existing diaconal programs, there was strong representation from the ecclesiastical provinces of British Columbia & Yukon, Ontario, and Canada. From the vast Province of Rupert's Land, however, came only one deacon – the author![67] The conference concluded with a unanimous decision to form an association of Canadian deacons affiliated with the North American Association for the Diaconate (now the Association for Episcopal Deacons). This was the genesis of the Association of Anglican

[67] Dioceses represented were: British Columbia, New Westminster, Kootenay, Cariboo, Caledonia, Yukon; Toronto, Ontario, Huron, Algoma, Moosonee, Montreal, Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island, Eastern Newfoundland & Labrador; and… Qu'Appelle.

Deacons in Canada (AADC), which was recognized by NAAD (AED) as its Canadian affiliate, arranged for joint memberships, and now holds conferences in off-years of the triennial AED conferences. Five of these have been held: in Charlottetown in 2004, Vancouver in 2008, London (ON) in 2011, Halifax in 2014, and Victoria in 2017.

By 2017, AADC estimated that there were 340 vocational deacons in Canada, of whom about 300 were active, plus 37 diaconal candidates. Two-thirds of them were women. By then, every diocese in Canada had deacons, with the sole exception of the Diocese of Saskatchewan (the latter, like the Church of England, has an active lay readers' program). However, in 2014, Saskatchewan's diocesan synod approved a report recommending a diaconal program. Some dioceses had very few deacons: one in Central Newfoundland, two in Western Newfoundland, and three each in Algoma, Athabasca, and Moosonee. On the other hand, the diaconate was thriving in other dioceses: 21 in Eastern Newfoundland & Labrador, 36 in Huron, 22 in the new indigenous jurisdiction of Mishamikoweesh, 36 in New Westminster, 18 in Niagara, and 45 in Toronto. New Westminster also had the large number of 14 candidates for the diaconate.[68] By 2014, two British Columbia deacons – both of them directors of deacons in their dioceses – had been appointed as archdeacons, the first such cases in Canada. (Deacons are bemused that almost all Anglican archdeacons are priests, not deacons. The Anglican Communion should consider adopting the Orthodox Church's title of archpriest!)

Chapter III The Diaconate Today

Defining Our Terms

At this point, it may be helpful to review terminology. A widely-accepted term is "transitional" deacon, that is, a person in deacon's orders for a usually brief, *pro forma* time on the way to ordination to the priesthood. We have also mentioned the "perpetual" deacon, the not-very-successful experiment to revive the diaconate in the Episcopal Church in the 1950s. The term "permanent" deacon was next used to delineate the continuing diaconal minister from the transitional variety (and continues to be the preferred Roman Catholic usage). The appellation "vocational" deacon then became a more accepted term, but it is giving way to "distinctive deacon" or just plain "deacon," on the grounds that it is *transitional* deacons who should be considered the exception to the norm.[69] There are also "stipendiary" deacons who earn their living through this ministry, but these are rare. Most deacons (other than the transitional brand) are "non-stipendiary;" in other words they earn their living outside the church structure, which is, as we shall see, one of the most powerful signs of the contemporary diaconate.

The Deacon as Symbol

Having looked at what deacons did in the early church and what they did not do afterwards, let us look at what deacons can, could, and should do now. But we must be careful with the word "do." As James Barnett put it, the diaconate is first and foremost a *symbol:*

> The primary function of […] the deacon is to be something, not to do something [...] Deacons […] are not ordained essentially in order that they may perform the distinctive functions of their order but to hold up diakonia as central to all Christian ministry.[70]

This is echoed in a Roman Catholic comment on diaconal ordination:

---

[68] Source: Deacon Canon Jacquie Bouthéon, Association of Anglican Deacons in Canada.

[69] Maylanne Maybee points out that "[a]djectives such as 'vocational,' 'permanent' or 'perpetual' suggest that the norm is a diaconate to which people are ordained as a condition of their priesthood" ("The State of the Diaconate in the Anglican Church of Canada," 97).

[70] *The Diaconate: A Full and Equal Order*, 140-141.

> On the day of ordination little is said about what a deacon should do. Rather, the rite focuses upon who a deacon should become […] we see in the diaconal ordination rite the raising of the principle of being over that of doing.[71]

When Bishop John Howe promoted the diaconate on the Lambeth agenda in 1968, he cautioned against "a functional approach – that of setting up a diaconate to relieve a particular need. Instead, restoration should be based on 'what the diaconate is and what deacons are for'."[72] And this, says Barnett, is that "[t]he deacon above all epitomizes within his or her office the ministry Christ has given to his Church, the servant ministry to which we are all called and commissioned in our Baptism."[73]

Re-assessing the Traditional View of Servant Ministry

As noted above, recent scholarship has broadened the meaning of *diakonia* from "service" to "ministry" and to include not only obvious forms of direct service but much more: messenger or communicator, agent, "go-between." An Orthodox bishop and theologian contends that "*diakonia* involves not only mercy, justice, and prophecy, but also worship, upbuilding the church, royal priesthood, and prayer and intercession."[74] John Collins challenged the long-accepted interpretation of biblical and early church references to the diaconate as meaning humble, even menial, service. In his view, a misreading of biblical language, as in the story of the commissioning of the Seven in *Acts* 6, resulted in "social work becoming the defining activity of deacons" in some parts of the church after the Reformation,[75] for example, the mid-nineteenth century Lutheran introduction of deacons and deaconesses in Germany. Across Germany, the Nordic countries and Holland, the German word *Diakonie* "became known … as the church's form of social service."[76] Its legacy to this day has been too restrictive an understanding of the diaconate, for "in some sectors of the modern diaconal movement this is precisely how the modern deacon's identity has been defined."[77] Deacons, says Collins, were and are much more: in the early Church they were, for example, "executives of the corporate leadership," relational figures, "agents of the church."[78]

The work of John Collins, as might be expected, generated much debate.[79] However, it definitely changed the understanding and the scope of the diaconate, as shown in the 1996 Anglican-Lutheran *Hanover Report.* This report summed up the diaconate by saying

> In the world in which the early church lived, diakonia seems to have referred to the service of a 'go-between' or agent who carries out activities for another […] Diakonia seems more concerned with apostleship than with our present understanding of the diaconate. […] Diaconal ministers are called to be agents of the church in interpreting and meeting needs, hopes, and concerns within church and society. [80]

---

[71] James Keating, *The Heart of the Diaconate* , 44.
[72] Cited in Ormonde Plater, *Many Servants*, 67.
[73] Barnett, 138.
[74] Paulos Mar Gregorios, *The Meaning and Nature of Diakonia* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1988), quoted in Ormonde Plater, *Many Servants*, xii.
[75] *Deacons and the Church*, 50.
[76] Ibid., 7.
[77] Ibid., 51
[78] Ibid., 127-131.
[79] See, for example, *The Distinctive Diaconate: A Report to the Board of Ministry, The Diocese of Salisbury*, 24-27; and Rosalind Brown, *Being a Deacon Today: Exploring a distinctive ministry in the Church and in the world* (Norwich: Canterbury Press; Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2005), 13-14.
[80] *The Diaconate as Ecumenical Opportunity*. *The Hanover Report of the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission*, published for the Anglican Consultative Council and the Lutheran World Federation (London: Anglican Communion Publications, 1996), 7, 16.

Rosalind Brown adopted this broader view of the diaconate, referring to it as "enabling people to worship, providing pastoral care and proclaiming the gospel. Deacons are… role models and catalysts for the baptismal ministry of all Christians."[81] In the words of the 2001 Church of England report *For such a time as this*, diaconal ministry is "liturgical, pastoral and catechetical;"[82] "the deacon is a person on a mission, an ambassador or messenger, making connections, building bridges, faithfully delivering a mandate."[83] The 2007 Church of England report, *The Mission and Ministry of the Whole Church,* obviously influenced by Collins' research, stated that the ancient function of the deacon as a

> responsible agent […] who carried out duties on behalf of the bishop […] has been eclipsed in recent decades by a rhetorical appeal to "humble service" on the part of deacons. It has not always been clear that, while deacons, like all Christians and all ministers, are indeed servants, they are servants first of the Lord who sends, then of the Church through whom he sends, but not servants in the sense of being at the disposal of all and sundry.

Roman Catholic scholarship is careful to strike a balance between the ecclesial and sacramental dimension of the diaconate and the practical ministry of social activism, service and outreach. Says Deacon James Keating in his introduction to a 2017 book *The Character of the Deacon,* "The deacon's primary ministry is twofold: to serve at the altar and ambo and from such service be sent by Christ, while always abiding with him in prayer, to respond to the spiritual and corporeal needs of people." The underlying premise of the essays in this book is the tripartite role of the deacon, based on the sacramental identity given through ordination: word, liturgy and charity. As one contributor neatly puts it, they are "three atoms united in a single molecular ministry."[84]

Deacons in Action

There is a wide variety of ways in which deacons function, once ordained. Their activity may be diocesan or parochial or both or neither. Many have a ministry of direct service, pastoral, social or charitable in nature – as hospital or prison or institutional visitors, or working with the poor and the marginalized, with minority groups, with the disabled, with advocacy organizations. Deacons may have a teaching ministry, or be involved in communications. They may undertake specific duties in a parish: Christian education, youth work, home visiting, taking the reserved sacrament to shut-ins, seniors' residences and care homes, and administrative or organizational or liturgical duties.

Should the deacon exercise a preaching ministry – or not? In the Anglican Communion, the response is ambivalent. James Barnett, in *The Diaconate: A Full and Equal Order*, stated categorically that "preaching was never a function belonging to the diaconate in the early Church" and that it should not be the norm for the restored diaconate, as it would confuse the diaconal and presbyteral roles.[85] Deacon Ormonde Plater, on the other hand, considered this to be an "antiquarian attitude." True, he said, bishops and priests are the "normal preachers," but deacons may "preach by invitation, not by order."[86] Rosalind Brown says that while "regular preaching during the principal Sunday services is not necessarily integral to the ministry of deacons […] nevertheless deacons may be called upon to preach at pastoral services and therefore it is appropriate that all deacons be trained to preach."[87] The ordinal in the Canadian *Book of Common Prayer* (1959) stipulated that one of the roles of the deacon

---

[81] Rosalind Brown, *Being a Deacon Today*, xi.
[82] Ibid., xiii.
[83] Ibid., 14.
[84] *The Character of the Deacon*, xi, 111..
[85] Barnett, *The Diaconate: A Full and Equal Order*, 191, 211-212.
[86] "Through the Dust," in *Diakoneo*, Vol. 28, #4, 2006 (Providence, RI: North American Association for the Diaconate), 16.
[87] *Being a Deacon Today,* 80-81.

is "to preach, if he be admitted thereto by the Bishop;" but this is omitted in the ordinals of *The Book of Alternative Services* (1985) and the Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer* (1977).

The Roman Catholic view, in contrast, is unambiguous. Deacons are authorized to preach with the approval of their priest, and Roman Catholic deacons see preaching as a normal part of their ministry. Deacon Jay Cormier, in *The Deacon's Ministry of the Word*, places it in a broader context. "This book," he says, "is about the deacon's ministry of proclaiming the Word of God. In the deacon's ministry, such proclamation takes place in a number of venues: the church, the classroom, the living room, sometimes even the local tavern."[88]

Deacons may preach and teach. Here, the author does a "role play" on the story of the "Road to Emmaus" with young people of the parish. To the left is Bishop Duncan Wallace.

It is important to note that although, as we shall see, deacons exercise much of their ministry outside "the Church," they should be firmly "rooted in the local church, living out with the people there… a life that reflects the love of Christ."[89] Deacons are not meant to be freelancers. Their role in a parish context is one of assisting, not presiding, although this does not preclude – indeed it presupposes – "leadership." Ormonde Plater said that "deacons serve best when they dare, when they speak out and act out, when they get themselves and others in trouble -– even when they arouse the mob."[90] When preaching, "[d]eacons are the chief aggravators in the congregation -– or they should be – and they don't have to worry about pleasing people."[91] Amidst all the variety of diaconal ministry there are three common threads for most deacons.

Worship

The first is **liturgical**, sacramental. *It is essential that deacons fulfil, and be clearly seen to fulfil, their liturgical roles, especially at the Eucharist*: assisting the presiding celebrant; proclaiming the

---

88 *The Deacon's Ministry of the Word* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2016), 6.

89 Rosalind Brown, *Being a Deacon Today*, 3.

90 *Many Servants*, First Edition, 61.

91 "Through the Dust."

Gospel; sometimes leading the Prayers of the People and the confession; inviting the people to share the peace; preparing the table; administering communion; and giving the Dismissal. The proclamation of the Gospel is the high point both of the ministry of the Word and of the deacon's role in the Eucharist. "The key to the deacons' incarnational ministry is their liturgical function in bringing the book of the Gospels into the assembly."[92] "[The] proclamation of the Gospel in the Eucharist […] is a vitally important liturgical act, the very heart of the ministry of the Word."[93] Significantly, while the presbyter (or bishop) convenes the assembly at the beginning of the eucharistic liturgy, it is the deacon who disperses it in the Dismissal, sending the faithful "to love and serve the Lord […] over the church threshold and out into the world."[94] As Rosalind Brown puts it, "[t]here is no diaconal ministry without service in the Eucharist where the deacon, with others, enables the church to express its identity as God's people."[95] A leading Roman Catholic liturgist, Keith Pecklers, emphasizes the direct connection between liturgy and service in the world – a diaconal function indeed: "How we worship is intimately linked to how we live."[96]

Note that the deacon plays an *assisting* or *collaborative* role for the presiding celebrant, whether bishop or priest. Deacons do not normally preside. Deacon and celebrant function as a team. A detailed study of the liturgical role of the deacon may be found in another paper by this author, *The Deacon in the Worshipping Community*.[97] Here is a summary of the diaconal role in the Eucharist. The roles in **bold** are the ones which the deacon, when present, should *always* fulfil. The others are recommended but are optional according to local custom. The deacon…

- Carries the Book of Gospels in the entrance procession.
- **Proclaims the Gospel.**
- Sometimes introduces and concludes the Prayers of the People.
- Sometimes leads the Prayers of the People.
- Gives the invitation to confession.
- At the Peace, invites those present to exchange a sign of peace.
- **Prepares the table at the offertory.**
- Turns pages in the altar book for the presider.
- Raises the cup at the doxology.
- Raises the cup at the invitation to communion.
- Assists in the administration of communion.
- Supervises ablutions.
- Makes closing announcements.
- **Gives the Dismissal.**

The diaconal role is not limited to the Eucharist. Deacons may officiate at Morning and Evening Prayer. They assist the bishop in episcopal liturgies: ordination, confirmation, blessing of the oils. Reflecting their involvement in "the world," they have a role in pastoral liturgies – baptisms,

---

92 Bishop David Stancliffe, "The Diaconate" (preparation paper for the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation, 1999), 5.

93 John E. Booty, *The Servant Church: Diaconal Ministry and the Episcopal Church* (Wilton, CT: Morehouse Publishing, 1982), 67.

94 Rosalind Brown, *Being a Deacon Today*, 55.

95 Ibid., 6.

96 Keith F. Pecklers, SJ, "Worship and Society," in *Worship: A Primer in Christian Worship* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2003), 163.

97 *The Deacon in the Worshipping Community*. Diocese of Qu'Appelle, March 2019 https://quappelle.anglican.ca/assets/docs/The_Deacon_in_the_Worshipping_Community.pdf

marriages and funerals – paying special attention to occasional worshippers.[98] The liturgies of Holy Week and Easter assign major duties to the deacon: on Palm Sunday, reading the Gospel of the Liturgy of the Palms; on Good Friday, leading the Solemn Intercession; at the Easter Vigil, carrying the paschal candle and singing the *Exsultet*. Sometimes the deacon acts as organizer or master of ceremonies or announcer, or, as in the Orthodox Churches, has major functions in prayer and music.

These liturgical roles are not incidental or peripheral; they are crucial for both the deacon and the assembly – not because deacons do useful things in the services (although they do), but because they are primarily a symbol, an icon. "The point is," says Ormonde Plater, "that a deacon, as a major performer in the assembly, plays a vital role in the complete action of the assembly by acting out messages of diaconal ministry. This performance does not take place in isolation, for the deacon works as part of a **team** *[our emphasis]* of actors."[99]

The liturgical role of the deacon must, however, be placed in context, not as an end in itself. As the Scottish Episcopal Church's 1987 report says, the liturgical role "is only the tip of the iceberg. Deacons focus the serving role of the Church, itself a loving response to the perceived needs of the world."[100]

Assisting in episcopal liturgies: Bishop Rob Hardwick presides at Confirmation on Pentecost Sunday, 2015, at St.Paul's Cathedral. The author is on the Bishop's right and sub-deacon Jason Antonio on his left.

Lay Ministry

The liturgical role of the deacon is only valid if it symbolizes a ministry in conjunction with others within and without the worshipping community. The team approach mentioned above with respect to liturgy is a hallmark of the diaconate in general. Says Rosalind Brown, "diaconal ministry… is

---

98 See Rosalind Brown, *Being a Deacon Today*, 56-59, for a good discussion of this pastoral/liturgical function.

99 *Many Servants*, 109.

100 *Truly Called by God to Serve as a Deacon*, 8.

always collaborative, and the relationship of the deacon to all the other members of the church is a litmus test of that person's diaconal ministry."[101] And so the second thread is that deacons **enable lay ministry**. Indeed, this should be one of their primary functions, "playing a part in meshing together all the ministries of all the baptized."[102] Some observers have noted a change in emphasis in the diaconate from being a "provider of service" to being a "promoter of service."[103] The Scottish Episcopal report previously cited affirms that "the mark of true Diaconate is to foster the initiation of lay ministries galore."[104]

And this means searching, co-opting, pushing, reconciling, leading, stimulating, organizing, encouraging lay members of the assembly to fulfil active functions in the liturgy and the community and beyond. Examples are recruiting, training and coordinating readers, greeters, servers, intercessors and communion ministers for worship; participating in teams of hospital or home visitors; prison and institutional ministry; representing the parish in outreach programs and liaison with community or advocacy organizations. Reports on the diaconate emphasize the relationship between deacons and lay ministry. *The Distinctive Diaconate* of the Diocese of Salisbury includes a chapter on "The relationship of the diaconate to lay ministers."[105]

The president of the Diakonia World Federation, speaking in 2017 about writings by David Clark, a leader in the British Methodist diaconate, noted that these portray

> a movement from diaconal ministry as something Deacons undertake on behalf of the church 'out there' to Deacons equipping and empowering the laity, the whole people of God, for diaconal ministry, and Deacons collaborating in collective action with others in the community, beyond the four walls of the church. It places Deacons within the heart of the congregation – visioning, animating, equipping, empowering, sending. It places Deacons within the heart of the community – building relationships, standing in solidarity, drawing alongside people and groups, committing to collective and collaborative action in cooperation with community groups to work towards an outcome that will enable flourishing for all. [106]

Outreach and Prophetic Ministry

The above statement leads us to the third thread of the diaconate: the role as **agent** or **ambassador** in the so-called secular world, acting as a go-between for the Church and society at large, functioning concurrently within the ecclesial community and outside it. Of course, this is part of the ministry of all the baptized. But deacons have a special identity in this area because they are *ordained.* Deacons (assuming that they are non-stipendiary) can discreetly make it known in their secular employment or in a social context that they are ordained ministers. This may not result in any specific pastoral activity. It should not be a pretext for recruiting parishioners. But at the very least it means the deacon is a living, walking symbol for the Church outside its own membership. And this places an onus on the deacon with respect to his or her lifestyle and his or her behaviour in the workplace. Thus, whereas the ministry of the presbyter is *primarily* (but certainly not entirely) to the gathered community, that of the deacon must be operative *both* inside and outside it – which is why the deacon should retain a base in a parish or other church community.

Deacons are supposed to be the bridge between the church and the world. As such, they bring

---

101 Rosalind Brown, *Being a Deacon Today*, 6.
102 Elaine Bardwell, "The Pastoral Role of the Deacon," in Christine Hall, ed., *The Deacon's Ministry*, 63.
103 See for example Susanne Watson Epting, *Unexpected Consequences*, 36-37.
104 *Truly Called by God to Serve as a Deacon*, 10.
105 73-76.
106 Deacon Sandy Boyce, address to the Diakonia World Federation Assembly, Chicago, July 2017.

> their everyday knowledge to an institution that frequently is used as a retreat from the world […] Deacons can help one side understand the other, through their life experience, and their decision to be one of the ordered members of the church.[107]

Deacon Susanne Watson Epting cautions, however, against a "dualistic" view of diaconal and presbyteral ministry, one outside and the other inside the church community. This, she says, might "discourage deacons from an appropriate kind of teaching, preaching, and equipping of saints inside the church's walls."[108] Although, as we have seen, the diaconate should not be narrowly defined as social service, ministry to the poor and marginalized has always been one of its key characteristics. For many deacons, this is their prime ministry. They are found playing leading roles in prison ministry, community advocacy groups, inner city outreach, food banks, assistance to victims of violence and abuse, work with Indigenous peoples, immigrants and refugees, and political and environmental activism. Deacons may be involved in ministry to the elderly, the disabled, shut-ins, and those in hospitals and care homes.

Diaconal ministry to the marginalized has had a renewed impetus in the 21st century. The Churches, increasingly marginalized themselves in a post-Christian, secularized society, are rediscovering or re-emphasizing their historical and biblical mission to the poor and needy and thus their call to *diakonia*. Deacons, emblematic of the *diakonia* of the baptized, can be at its forefront. Christian leaders are calling on faith communities to revitalize their diaconal mission. Pope Francis has been particularly eloquent in this regard.

Diakonia is the calling of all the baptized. Volunteers at St. Paul's Cathedral prepare lunches for the needy in the community.

Archbishop Fred Hiltz, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, made a clarion call to servant ministry at the 2014 conference of the Association of Anglican Deacons in Canada. He took much of his inspiration from Pope Francis, especially his first Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* ("The Joy of the Gospel"). He quoted Francis as saying, "Our redemption has a social dimension because God in Christ redeems not only the individual person, but also the social relations existing between people." He also quoted Katharine Jefferts Schori, then Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, and Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, calling on Christians to fight against poverty. The Archbishop spoke to the assembled deacons about

---

[107] W. Keith McCoy, *The Deacon as a Para-Cleric* (Providence, RI: North American Association for the Diaconate, Monograph Series No. 9, 1998), 5.

[108] *Unexpected Consequences*, 37.

> your servant ministry, your political ministry, your ministry of engaging others in this work. While all the baptized are called to respond to human need by loving service, to respect the dignity of every human person and to strive for justice and peace among all people, deacons by virtue of their ordinations are publicly accountable servants. We hold letters of orders and a licence to minister. We must be able to give an account of our diakonia.[109]

The Methodist Church in the United Kingdom is similarly involved. A member of the Methodist Diaconal Order, David Clark, already mentioned, summarizing his book, *Building Kingdom Communities*, says,

> *I*n a world in which resources are unjustly distributed, identities are under threat and solidarity is fragile, the toughest task facing humanity is the quest for community. Christians fail to grasp that in the gifts of the kingdom community– life, liberation, love and learning - they hold the key to what the search for community is all about. This book describes those gifts and how a servant church, through the creation of its diaconate as an order of mission, might offer a fragmented world new hope. [110]

Discernment, Formation and Ordination

The process of identifying candidates for the diaconate and then, once approved, of following through with their training and then ordination, varies a great deal between dioceses. Some have quite elaborate, formal programs, requiring several years. In others, the process may be shorter and more informal. Much depends on the preferences of individual bishops. Because of this variety, it is not possible to do justice to the subject here. There is, however, in the words of Archbishop Fred Hiltz, "a fairly common admission across our Church and across The Episcopal Church too that our discernment, training and formation programs have been weak and wanting in helping deacons to grasp and take hold of this ministry [of 'interpreting to the Church the needs, concerns and hopes of the world.'] with competence and confidence."[111] Eileen Scully, Director of Faith, Worship, and Ministry of the Anglican Church of Canada, prepared, in consultation with dioceses across Canada, a document on "Competencies for Ordination to the Diaconate in The Anglican Church of Canada," following completion of similar document for the priesthood. The 2016 *Iona Report: Final Report of the Task Forces on the Diaconate* sets out desired competencies for deacons in seven areas: Diakonia and the Diaconate; Human Awareness and Understanding; Spirituality and Spiritual Practice; Practical Training and Experience; Church Polity and Diaconal Ministry in the Public Square; Scripture; and Christian History.[112]

Discernment and Acceptance

Experience has shown that candidates for the diaconate have usually been active members of the Church for a fairly long time, and are already exercising a form of diaconal ministry and leadership within the church community, or outside it, or both. The discernment process for locally-ordained

---

[109] Most Rev. Fred Hiltz, "Diakonia: Spontaneous, Congregational, Institutional, Political." Address to the Association of Anglican Deacons in Canada Conference, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 2014.

[110] David Clark, *Building Kingdom Communities – with the diaconate as a new order of mission*. Peterborough, UK: Upfront Publishing, 2016.

[111] Most Rev. Fred Hiltz, "Diakonia: Spontaneous, Congregational, Institutional, Political."

[112] *The Iona Report: The Diaconate in the Anglican Church of Canada.* Toronto: The General Synod, The Anglican Church of Canada, 2016. www.anglican.ca/diaconate

ministers is sometimes undertaken through a parish discernment group. Some cautionary words:

- Candidates for the diaconate should be screened for both personal motivation and wide parish support. Their vocation should not, from either point of view, appear to be a new form of *cursus honorum*, moving upwards through the ranks of lay offices to be rewarded by the accolade of ordination. Nor should it be satisfying a desire for authority, or prestige, or liturgical visibility. Nor should a candidate be pushed forward by the incumbent of the parish for reasons of personal favouritism or vague notions that "it would be nice to have deacon." If these danger signals appear, the candidate is seeking ordination for the wrong reasons and should be gently but firmly dissuaded. Otherwise, the perennial accusation of clericalizing lay ministry may be warranted.

- Diocesan discernment committees must assiduously avoid classifying the diaconate as a secondary order of ministry or as "next-best" to the priesthood. In some instances, candidates for non-stipendiary ministry have not been considered suitable material for the priesthood but have been told that they should satisfy themselves with the diaconate instead.

- The continued existence of the transitional diaconate beside the vocational diaconate, undesirable as it may be, but tenacious as it is too, presents its own set of problems:

    - .Candidates for the diaconate may not make the distinction between the two and consider that their diaconate is a step to "full ordination" – an unfortunate phrase used in the author's experience. Diocesan discernment processes must, from the outset, clearly identify the diaconate as a unique, permanent vocation – no easy task, since so many Anglicans, including clergy, persist in assuming that the diaconate should normally culminate in the presbyterate.

    - Some deacons, once ordained, even if ostensibly as vocational deacons, may then seek ordination to the priesthood. If this is allowed to happen, another perennial accusation is justified: the diaconate used as a back door to the priesthood. Dioceses must take a firm stand both before and after diaconal ordination. If a locally-ordained deacon subsequently feels a call to the priesthood, that person should be required to go back to "square one" and start anew the process of discernment, formation and ordination.

- Beware of "episcopal end-runs," to use an expression of one Canadian director of deacons. Bishops sometimes ignore or override the recommendations on diaconal ordination of the appropriate diocesan body, or pressure that body, or let it be known that the candidate has the personal support of the bishop, or seek to do a favour to a priest who ardently wishes the candidate to be a deacon in his or her parish. This can wreak havoc with the process and lead to unsuitable ordinations. While bishops have the last word in ordination, and in theory can ordain whomever they wish, they should discipline themselves to follow due process.

Formation

A variety of training programs for the diaconate exists. Much will depend on the educational background and life experience of the postulant, given that most candidates for the vocational diaconate seek ordination later in life. Diocesan programs normally take this into account and adapt their formation to the perceived needs of the candidate. At a minimum, postulants should have training in the Old and New Testaments, basic theology, church history, pastoral care, prayer and spirituality, preaching, and liturgy. This can be done through a combination of correspondence or on-line courses, participation in seminars, weekend sessions and summer courses. Hands-on training and supervision in the parish by experienced clergy are valuable. Consultation and fellowship with, and

mentorship by, existing deacons should be part of the process. Given the prevailing ambiguity about the diaconate in the Anglican Communion, thorough study of the diaconate is vital – its history, its place in the theology of orders, its contemporary practice, the roles and expectations of the deacon, the place of the deacon in church polity and in parish life, the liturgical function of the deacon. Only if these are clearly explained to, and acknowledged by, the candidate, will that person approach ordination without the misconceptions alluded to in the Discernment section above.

Ordination
Each diocese will have its own preparation for ordination. This usually involves meetings between the postulants and the director of deacons (if such exists), bishop and parish priest and some form of pre-ordination retreat. The following comments are directed more to the actual ordination service, which is of vital importance not only to the ordinand but to the gathered community for which he or she is being ordained. The symbolism of the ordination rite cannot be over-emphasized. Of course this is true for any ordination, but it is crucial for the diaconate, which, as we have seen, is constantly misunderstood, under-valued and even distorted. A well-conducted ordination can send all the right messages. Conversely, a poorly-done ordination sends very wrong messages. The author has experienced superb diaconal ordinations but also, alas, some disastrous ones.

.

- *The postulant should study the ordination rite.* While this may seem obvious, some ordinands have been known to approach the ordination service unprepared and not fully aware of what is going to happen. An appropriate person should take them through the liturgy step by step.

- *The diocesan authorities should carefully prepare the service:* its location, music, preacher, readers and other individual roles. There must be a rehearsal – not last-minute and rushed, but calm and prayerful, allowing all the time it takes for the participants to be comfortable.

- *The integrity of the ordinal must be preserved.* This is no time for liturgical experimentation or for catering to the individual whims of the ordinand or the parish priest.

- *Do not combine diaconal ordinations with others.* Deacons should *never* be ordained at the same service as priests. We would go further and urge that transitional and vocational deacons not be ordained at the same service. To do so aids and abets the confusion of orders. And at ordinations to the presbyterate, the ordinands should *not* begin the service wearing a diaconal stole, to have it replaced after the consecration by the priest's stole. This sends precisely the wrong message about graduation to higher office in the Church.

- *The service should visibly involve other deacons.* While deacons do not historically form a "college" like that of the presbyters, they should enjoy fellowship, meet regularly, and, at diaconal ordinations, collectively welcome the ordinands to their number. Deacons fulfil their normal roles at the ordination: assisting the bishop; reading the Gospel; leading intercessions; preparing the table. A newly-ordained deacon typically assists at the altar for the Eucharist and gives the Dismissal. At diaconal ordinations in the Diocese of Qu'Appelle, deacons form a semi-circle around the bishop at the prayer of consecration. Deacons help vest the new deacon in the dalmatic (if worn) and stole. Deacons can also act as presenters, litanist or communion ministers.

Chapter IV Contemporary Issues

Objections to the Diaconate
The 1974 report to the Church of England, already mentioned, recommending abolition of the

diaconate, based its conclusion on two main arguments: that "there was no functional task that belonged exclusively to deacons" and that "deacons take away from, and indeed clericalize, ministry which properly belonged to lay people."[113] One objection to the diaconate, then, is that deacons are not necessary because lay people can do everything they can. Technically this is true. But it is also very misleading. For one thing, lay people rarely do *all* the things that a deacon does: the liturgical functions at the Eucharist; officiating at Morning or Evening Prayer; conducting some baptisms, weddings and funerals; occasionally preaching; pastoral, teaching or administrative duties; social action; enabling lay ministry; playing a practical and symbolic role in the wider community.

For another, to repeat a point already made, deacons are *ordained*, officially commissioned by the Church to which they make a lifetime commitment. Of course, every Christian makes a commitment in baptism, but there is a major difference of role – which takes us back to the organic nature of the Church, where each has a specific role to fulfil. "The deacon is thrust into a position of leadership and is acknowledged, *on account of the solemn rite of ordination* [our emphasis], as a leader who serves, enabling the *diakonia* of the whole church."[114]
Th.e second objection is that a revived diaconate risks clericalizing lay ministry: we do not need another clerical order to do things which should be done by lay people, and some deacons act like mini-priests. There is indeed that risk, and some deacons do fall into that trap. But if we are worried about clericalism, we should also look at the "omnivorous priesthood," the one-man-band syndrome still often found in the Anglican Church. Most assuredly, the risk of clericalism is not limited to the diaconate! In any event, we have emphasized that enabling lay ministry should be one of the prime objectives of the deacon; deacons who are not doing so should have a long, hard look at themselves. The diaconate need not and should not discourage lay ministry; in fact, it should do exactly the opposite.

The Report of the 1998 Lambeth Conference addressed this very issue: "The experience of many dioceses indicates that the appropriate training and oversight of deacons at work in dioceses, congregations and agencies of care, advocacy and justice will ensure that more, not less, lay participation in servant ministry will occur."[115] In *The Hanover Report*, the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission responded to both of the above objections:

> […] deacons have no special powers or activities exclusively reserved to them. What is, however, distinctive is their call to be **publicly accountable servants of the church** [our emphasis] who have a charge to model, encourage and coordinate diakonia. This is the particular call or vocation of the deacon that is not shared by all Christians.[116]

Other objections to the diaconate are more pragmatic. Some bishops fear losing control over ordained clergy who are not employed by the Church – even though non-stipendiary deacons (and, for that matter, non-stipendiary priests), like all clergy, must be licensed to carry out their functions. Some priests, especially those accustomed to solo ministry, are apprehensive that deacons will challenge their status. Interestingly, Lutheran deaconesses attending the 2000 conference of Canadian Anglican deacons mentioned the same issue vis-à-vis their pastors. The Anglican-Lutheran International Commission, in an important statement, recognized it as a challenge for both Churches:

> In both traditions, the presbyters may perceive a renewed diaconate as a threat to their own identity and role. **This will be especially so where the presbyteral office is seen as the**

---

[113] Quoted by Bishop David Stancliffe in the Foreword to Rosalind Brown, *Being a Deacon Today*, vii.
[114] John Booty, *The Servant Church*, 89.
[115] *The Official Report of the Lambeth Conference, 1998*, 203.
[116] *The Hanover Report*, 23.

> **embodiment of all ordained ministry** [our emphasis]. If, however, presbyters can welcome deacons as partners-in-ministry, both liturgically and within the church's mission, then they themselves may be freed to exercise a more focused ministry, bearing responsibility for the life of the community in Word and sacrament. In this way, too, the diaconate can stand as a witness against the perennial threat of clericalism, an ecclesiastical distortion rooted in exclusivist attitudes and practices. Deacons are called by the very nature of their order to stand as a witness to presbyters and bishops that the authority of all ordained ministry is for service alone.[117]

The Diaconate as Ecumenical Opportunity

Given that the return of the deacon in the western Church occurred in the same period as serious ecumenical discussions, the inter-church context is of considerable interest. It is conceivable, in the words of the *Hanover Report*, that the diaconate could be viewed as an "ecumenical opportunity" and could assist Christian Churches in their quest for unity. A landmark 1982 document of the World Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, succinctly expressed the deacon's role: "Deacons represent to the Church its calling as servant in the world. By struggling in Christ's name with the myriad needs of societies and persons, deacons exemplify the interdependence of worship and service in the Church's life."[118]

In dialogue between Anglicans and Roman Catholics or Orthodox, the diaconate has rarely been singled out for particular attention, largely because these Communions share the same basic view of the order. However, whereas the Anglican Communion followed the Roman Catholic Church in reviving the diaconate after many centuries of neglect, the Orthodox Churches have always maintained distinctive deacons (as well as the transitional diaconate).[119]

Women in the Diaconate

In the Orthodox Churches, theologians have recognized that women were ordained deacons (often called deaconesses) in the Byzantine Church, and several efforts have been made since the 19th century to resume the practice. Kyriaki FitzGerald records such attempts, and some actual ordinations, in the Russian and Greek Orthodox Churches between the mid-19th and mid-20th centuries. The Inter-Orthodox Theological Consultation held in Rhodes in 1988 formally recommended restoring "the apostolic order of deaconesses."[120] The Consultation noted that earlier in the Church's history, "the deaconess was ordained within the sanctuary during the Divine Liturgy with two prayers; she received the Orarion (the deacon's stole) and received Holy Communion at the Altar." Fitzgerald pointed out that the Rhodes Consultation "clearly affirmed women deacons were ordained in the Byzantine period and recommended that this practice be restored." She reported several further consultations and conferences which urged the Orthodox Churches to ordain deaconesses.

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who had attended the Rhodes Consultation as a priest, stated in 1995 that "there is no canonical difficulty in ordaining women as deacons in the Orthodox Church." Two years later, at a consultation of Orthodox women at the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul, Bartholomew spoke of the "call for the full restoration of the order of the deaconesses."[121] Roman Catholic scholar Phyllis Zagano points out that the Armenian Apostolic Church, one of the Oriental

---

[117] Ibid., 22.
[118] Geneva: World Council of Churches, Faith and Order Paper No. 111, 1982, 27.
[119] For a view of the Orthodox diaconate, see Kyriaki Fitzgerald, "A Commentary on the Diaconate in the Contemporary Orthodox Church," in Christine Hall, ed., *The Deacon's Ministry*, 147-158.
[120] Kyriaki Fitzgerald, "A Commentary on the Diaconate…," 156.
[121] Kyriaki Fitzgerald, *Women Deacons in the Orthodox Church*, 171.

non-Chalcedonian, Churches, "has never abandoned its practice of ordaining women to the diaconate." Since deacons were required at celebrations of the Eucharist, women were ordained for this purpose in convents. In the 20th century, this ministry was extended to parish churches.[122] The Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church of Greece voted in 2004 to restore the female diaconate – Metropolitan Christodoulos had already ordained a woman deacon in 1986.[123] In 2017, Patriarch Theodoros II of Alexandra and All Africa ordained five women deacons in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.[124]

The question of ordaining women to the diaconate is not excluded in the Roman Catholic Church, where "official pronouncements refusing to ordain women to the priesthood carefully refrain from any references to the diaconate in this context."[125] In what she calls "unfinished business of Vatican II," Phyllis Zagano affirms that "there has been no modern ruling against the ordination of women deacons in the Catholic Church, and no ruling that overrides the conciliar documents or historic practice."[126] The majority of scholarship there, as in Orthodoxy, after some debate, appears to have concluded that women were indeed ordained to the diaconate during the first millennium.

Dr. Zagano contends that the Church could, and now should, resume the ordination of women as deacons. Indeed, she asserts that, since the Roman Catholic Church recognizes the validity of the orders of the Orthodox and Oriental churches, it *de facto* recognizes that of women deacons such as those of the Armenian Apostolic Church.[127] The orders of the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht are technically considered valid by the Roman Catholic Church. Some of these Churches (Germany, Austria, The Netherlands, Switzerland) ordain women to the priesthood as well as the diaconate, limiting the practical effect of such recognition. In 2003, however, the Old Catholic Church of the Czech Republic voted to ordain women only to the diaconate and indeed ordained one that year. Thus, says Dr. Zagano, it is "the only Western Church whose orders and apostolic succession are recognized by the Catholic Church that ordains solely to the diaconate and affirmatively, not to priesthood."[128]

Another Roman Catholic writer, John Winjgaards, takes the issue a step further. In *The Ordination of Women in the Catholic Church,* he rebuts the traditional arguments since mediaeval times against the ordination of women.[129] He goes on in another book to argue that, although the diaconate is indeed a separate order with its own integrity, the doctrine of the unity of orders means that "[s]ince women in the past did receive the sacrament of the diaconate, they are obviously capable of receiving holy orders as such; that means also the priesthood and episcopacy."[130] (Kevin Madigan and Karen Osiek document some actual examples of women presbyters in the third to fifth centuries, usually but by no means always in "heretical" churches, and, surprisingly, more in the West than in the East.[131])

---

122 Phyllis Zagano, *Holy Saturday: An Argument for the Restoration of the Female Diaconate in the Catholic Church* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2000), 171-172.

123 Phyllis Zagano, *Women in Ministry: Emerging Questions about the Diaconate* (New York: Paulist Press, 2012), 23.

124 "Orthodox move for women deacons is 'revitalization', not 'innovation'," *National Catholic Reporter* online, November 30, 2017.

125 Jill Pinnock, "The History of the Diaconate," in Christine Hall, ed., *The Deacon's Ministry*, 22.

126 *Women in Ministry*, 23.

127 *Holy Saturday* , 173-174.

128 *Women in Ministry*, 31.

129 *The Ordination of Women in the Catholic Church: Unmasking a Cuckoo's Egg Tradition*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd; New York: Continuum, 2001.

130 *Women Deacons in the Early Church*, 135.

131 *Ordained Women in the Eastern Church*, 8-9, 204-205.

American Roman Catholic deacon William Ditewig notes that Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, as Cardinal Ratzinger, head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, said that "the possibility of ordaining women as deacons remains a question open for debate and discussion." While some theologians agree with Winjgaards on the unity of orders, he says, others argue that "sufficient diversity exists to distinguish between the sacerdotal (priestly) orders of bishops and presbyters, and the order of deacons. Because of this diversity, they argue, it might be possible to ordain women deacons."[132] Roman Catholic scholar Kenan B. Osborne argues that

> The permanent diaconate should be open also to women. Several dioceses and even conferences of local bishops have refused to establish the permanent diaconate in their dioceses precisely because it is not open to women. The present rumblings about establishing a ministry of deaconesses are not an answer to the issues involved in an open and permanent diaconate.[133]

The inability to have women deacons was one of the reasons why the Roman Catholic bishops in western Canada declined for decades to institute diaconal programs.

Osborne believes that "if the permanent male diaconate can be re-established after eleven hundred years of inactivity, then in a similar way there can be a re-establishing of the ministry of deaconesses after a similar length of inactivity."[134] From time to time, various Roman Catholic bishops and episcopal conferences – for example, that of Ireland in 2014 – have recommended admitting women to the diaconate.[135] Canadian Archbishop Paul-André Durocher of Gatineau, Quebec, raised the issue at the October 2015 Synod of Bishops on the Family.[136]

However, there is some strong opposition to female deacons in the Roman Catholic Church. It is believed that Pope Paul VI, after his restoration of the permanent (male) diaconate, asked for a study of the possibility of admitting women to the order. The result was Benedictine Father Cipriano Vagaggini's landmark 1974 article, "The Ordination of Deaconesses in the Greek and Byzantine Tradition," an erudite research paper which concluded that:

> …theologically, in virtue of the use of the Byzantine Church, it appears that women can receive diaconal ordination, which, by nature and dignity, is equated to the ordination of the deacon, and not simply to that of subdeacons or lectors, and much less […] to that of some lesser ministry constituted by what today one would call a simple benediction.[137]

This article was written for – and later suppressed by – the International Theological Commission, of which he was a member. In 1987, Vagaggini was asked to "make an intervention before the Synod of Bishops on the Laity" in the area of "women in the church"[138]. Referring to his much longer 1974 essay and responding to A.G. Martimort's contrary view published in1982, Vagaggini said, "In that article, I maintained, and still maintain today, that the competent authority of the church, if it judges it

---

[132] William T. Ditewig, *101 Questions and Answers on Deacons* (New York: Paulist Press, 2004), 52.
[133] Kenan B. Osborne, O.F.M., "Envisioning a Theology of Ordained and Lay Ministry: Lay/Ordained Ministry – Current Issues of Ambiguity," in Susan K. Wood, ed., *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood: Theologies of Lay and Ordained Ministry* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2003), 223.
[134] Kenan B. Osborne, O.F.M., *The Permanent Diaconate: Its History and Place in the Sacrament of Orders*, 174.
[135] Leo O'Reilly, Bishop of Kilmore, raised the issue again in 2015 (*Prairie Messenger*, 1 July 2015, 20).
[136] *Prairie Messenger*, 14 & 21 October 2015.
[137] Ibid., 59.
[138] Phyllis Zagano, in ibid., vii.

appropriate, can admit women to the sacrament of order in the diaconate."[139] As was the case with his 1974 article, Vagaggini's 1987 study was not acted upon by the Vatican. The final Synod document, *Christi fideles laici*, published in 1988, did not even mention women deacons.

German theologian and bishop Gerhard Müller, already cited, took the same view of the unity of orders as John Winjgaards, but drew the opposite conclusion about women deacons. In his 2000 book, he categorically stated that women cannot be ordained to any of the orders of ministry – and he was clearly unhappy with the Anglican Communion for doing so. Müller took pains to discredit the idea that women were sacramentally ordained deacons in the early Church (interestingly, he did not address the very different opinion of Orthodox theologians on the matter). He deplored that the "vote in favour of a women's diaconate, which bishops are then supposed to communicate to Rome, has become a part of the ritual at synods, academic conferences and workshops."[140]

According to Phyllis Zagano, the International Theological Commission took up the work on female deacons again in the 1990s, but its brief paper on the subject in 1997 was not signed by then Cardinal Ratzinger, head of the Commission, and was not published. Another, much longer, study by the C.ommission in 2002 drew heavily on the work of Martimort and Müller; while it did completely rule it out, it firmly discouraged the notion of women in the diaconate. A Vatican "notification" of 2001 had already stated that "the preparation of women candidates for diaconal ordination was not licit because the Church does not envisage it will ordain women to the diaconate."[141] A decree of the Congregation of the Faith in 2007 reiterated the point. Nonetheless, Zagano remains optimistic that under Pope Francis, as she had previously hoped under Pope Benedict XVI, the Roman Catholic Church will in due course admit women to the diaconate. After all, it is now a question of authority (*magisterium*), not of theology. In other words, while the Church states clearly that it *cannot* ordain women as priests, it admittedly *can* ordain women as deacons if it wishes – but it chooses not to, or at least, not yet. In 2016 Pope Francis appointed a commission to study the issue of women in the diaconate – with Phyllis Zagano as one of its members.[142]

Lutheran Deacons

The United Church of Canada and a number of other Protestant denominations have a form of diaconal ministry and in many evangelical Churches there are boards of deacons. But these are clearly for lay persons and do not involve ordination. The situation in the Lutheran churches is much more complex. Lutherans generally did not preserve an ordained diaconate at the Reformation, but they later had commissioned diaconal ministers, including deaconesses, a movement which began in 19th century Germany.

The 1996 *Hanover Report* of the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission examined the diaconate from the point of view of the two Churches. The report was dedicated to the memory of Tom Dorris, an ordained Swedish Lutheran deacon who served in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, was "a keen advocate of a restored diaconate," and had been working at the World Council of Churches in Geneva. However, in 1993 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's General Assembly rejected an ordained diaconate (saying it was not the Reformation tradition, despite the example of the Church of Sweden) and established its present ministry of lay diaconal ministers. This was despite Tom Dorris's best efforts and much to his distress. He was, said Episcopal Deacon

---

[139] *Ordination the Women to the Diaconate in the Eastern Churches*, 1.

[140] *Priesthood and Diaconate*, 42.

[141] See *Ordination the Women to the Diaconate in the Eastern Churches*, xi-xii, and *Women in Ministry*, 15-16.

[142] Phyllis Zagano edited a collection of essays by leading scholars in the question of the female diaconate: *Women Deacons? Essays with Answers* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2016).

Ormonde Plater, "a living example of the reality of an ordained Lutheran diaconate."[143]

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada does not have an ordained diaconate; yet Lutheran deaconesses who shared in the first gathering of Canadian Anglican deacons in Winnipeg in 2000 affirmed that the difference between their commissioning rite and the ordination of pastors was almost imperceptible. In Anglican-Lutheran dialogue at both the international and Canadian levels, while more attention has focused on the episcopate, there has been some interest on the Lutheran side in the diaconate as part of a three-fold ordained ministry. On the other hand, given the ambivalence of their own attitude to the diaconate, Anglicans have scarcely been in a position to instruct Lutherans on the subject. As the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission politely noted in The *Hanover Report*, Anglican churches are challenged to restore to the diaconate […] its character as a lifelong and distinct form of ordained ministry, including with its liturgical function a pastoral focus on caritas and justitia in church and society.[144]

The *Hanover Repor*t noted that " 'Deacon' in most Lutheran traditions refers to a person consecrated or commissioned to a ministry focused on parish work or social service, but not ordained."[145] It added, however, that some Lutheran churches were actively reconsidering the ordained diaconate. The Church of Norway, for example, where deacons are parish workers, "has been wrestling with the issue of whether deacons are within the *ministerium ecclesiasticum*, together with the pastors and bishops."[146] In the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, deacons are not ordained; most are women qualified in health care, although some are social workers. There has been discussion, however, of the need to incorporate teaching and liturgical roles in their ministry.

In the Church of Sweden, the situation is very different: there is a permanent, ordained diaconate as part of a three-fold ministry – but no transitional diaconate. The Church of Sweden's official website, in a very Anglican way, emphasizes that at the Reformation the Church retained the historic episcopate and the orders of bishops, priests and deacons. It notes that in the 19th century, "several deaconess institutions were founded in Sweden on the German model. The deaconesses were bound by vows to a motherhouse, and to a life of celibacy and poverty. Around 1900, men were admitted to the diaconate." In the 1960s the celibacy and motherhouse requirements were dropped. Today, says the website, "a deacon (deaconess) visits, helps, and supports those in bodily or spiritual need; gives Christian nurture and teaching in the faith; is a sign of merciful kindness in the parish and society at large, and in all things serves Christ in the neighbour."[147] Deacons in the Swedish church were traditionally engaged in social ministry, latterly as complementary to the state system; it is only in recent decades that they have also developed teaching and liturgical roles.

The Porvoo Agreement, concluded in 1996 between most Nordic Lutheran Churches and the Anglican Churches of the British Isles, leading to the Porvoo Communion, stated that they would "welcome persons episcopally ordained in any of our churches to the office of bishop, priest or deacon to serve […] in that ministry in the receiving church without reordination and work towards a common understanding of diaconal ministry." We mentioned earlier that the Scottish Episcopal Church engaged with the Lutheran Churches of the Porvoo Agreement when preparing its 2015 report *Truly Called…Two.* Three consultations have taken place between the Porvoo partners, showing a wide measure of convergence on the diaconate: London, 2006; Oslo, 2009; and Dublin, 2013 (the latter produced a statement, *Diaconal Ministry as a Proclamation of the Gospel*).

---

143 Comment by Deacon Ormonde Plater to the author, December 2011.
144 *The Hanover Report*, 22.
145 Ibid., 14.
146 Diocese of Salisbury, *The Distinctive Diaconate*, 50.
147 http://www.svenskakyrkan.se

A major report by the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission, *To Love and Serve the Lord: Diakonia in the Life of the Church*,[148] appeared in 2012. Known as the "Jerusalem Report" after the location of the Commission's meeting in 2011 (the co-chair was Archbishop Fred Hiltz, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada), the document focused on the understanding and practice of *diakonia* in the two Communions rather than on the diaconate as such. For this it deferred to and liberally quoted the *Hanover Report* issued by its predecessor commission sixteen years earlier. The Jerusalem Report stated that for both Lutherans and Anglicans *diakonia* is a "shared imperative," crucial to the prophetic mission of the Church – reconciliation, healing, the alleviation of poverty, and the struggle against injustice and oppression. However, the report is interspersed with references to the diaconate and its fifth and final chapter, "Diakonia and Ministry," explores how the deacon can through servant leadership promote and facilitate the *diakonia* of the whole Church. The report's Conclusion called f.or a "deepened understanding of *diakonia* for the diaconate" and recognition that "the *diakonia* of the whole Church is focused and channelled through the ministry of deacons and diaconal ministers."

An Opportunity?

Where, then, is the "ecumenical opportunity" for the diaconate? *First*, the existence, revival or introduction of deacons in so many different church traditions – Roman Catholic, Orthodox , Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist, and Reformed – points to a widespread recognition of the need and desirability of diaconal ministries. This provides a common bond between the Churches and an invaluable experience of shared ministry, even if the forms may be different (as we have seen, in some traditions deacons are ordained, while in others they are not; in the case of Lutherans, ordination to the diaconate is practised in some national Churches and not in others).

An International Anglican-Roman Catholic-Ukrainian Catholic Conference on the Diaconate, held in Regina, Canada, in 2018, witnessed to a resurgence of interest in the diaconate in those traditions. It resulted in a book based on the conference but expanded to include contributions on the Methodist and Lutheran diaconates.[149]

The World Federation of Diaconal Associations and Diaconal Communities gives voice to the world-wide diaconal movement. Also known as Diakonia World Federation, it is organized into three regions: Diakonia Region Africa-Europe (DRAE), Diakonia Asia-Pacific (DAP), and Diakonia of the Americas and the Caribbean (DOTAC). There is an evident opportunity here for practical ecumenical relations and a growth in mutual understanding between churches, stemming from their mutual interest in diaconal ministry.

---

[148] *To Love and Serve the Lord: Diakonia in the Life of the Church. The Jerusalem Report of the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission.* Lutheran World Federation and Anglican Communion, 2012.

[149] D. Michael Jackson, ed., *The Diaconate in Ecumenical Perspective* (Durham: Sacristy Press, 2019).

Anglican and Roman Catholic deacons worshipping together: at the left, Deacon Michael Jackson assists Bishop Rob Hardwick; at the right, Deacon Joe Lang assists Vicar General Lorne Crozon, at the annual Anglican-Roman Catholic Joint Prayer Service on Pentecost Sunday, May 2015, in Holy Rosary Cathedral, Regina.

Second, deacons can work together on a local level. Anglicans in Canada enjoy a mutual recognition of ministries with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, as do the Anglican and Lutheran parties to the Porvoo Agreement. Anglican deacons can collaborate with Lutheran deaconesses and support them in their quest to make their office a fully ordained order. Where there is not a mutual recognition of ministries – the Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions do not recognize the validity of Anglican orders – there is still the potential for local cooperation. For example, the Anglican Diocese of Qu'Appelle and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Regina entered into a covenant relationship in 2011. The deacons of both dioceses meet and work together and contribute to each other's formation programs.

.

The *third* area of ecumenical potential for the diaconate is, in many respects, the most interesting and the most challenging: the ordination of women. As we have seen above, while women were admitted to the diaconate in the early church, especially in the East, and have been admitted to the order in recent times in the Anglican, some Oriental and Orthodox, Old Catholic, and Lutheran traditions, this is still not the case for the Roman Catholic and most of the Orthodox churches. Yet theologians from these traditions have recognized that historically women were once ordained deacons and theoretically could be again, despite the firm opposition of both Churches to the ordination of women to the priesthood (and of course the episcopate). The main obstacle to female diaconal ordination, certainly in the Roman Catholic Church, appears to be the concern that, if women were ordained deacons, there would be increased pressure to ordain them priests. American Roman Catholic deacon Thomas Baker says

> *Much of the resistance to women deacons is based on a fear that it would create an expectation that women priests wouldn't be far behind. […] But at some point, perhaps a vision of the opportunity, rather than the risks, will carry the day. For my part, I can't imagine a change in discipline that would bring more life to the church, and more promise for its future.*[150]

[150] Thomas Baker. *Deacon* (*I Like Being in Parish Ministry* series) (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2002), 40.

On the other hand, Phyllis Zagano rightly points out that the ordination of women to the diaconate and to the priesthoood are two different issues:

> *…there is no direct link between ordaining a woman as a deacon and ordaining a woman as a priest, except for the conflation of the diaconate into the priesthood in the West, and the concurrent reduction of the diaconate to a step on the way to priesthood. In other words, the permanent diaconate – of men and women – is just that. Diaconal ordination does not imply priestly ordination.*[151]

Of course, this is true: we have been emphasizing throughout this study the integrity of the diaconate as an order of ministry distinct from the presbyterate. But unfortunately, thinking about holy orders is inevitably coloured by the continued existence of the transitional diaconate. Whether or not it actually presupposes subsequent ordination to the priesthood, that is the widely-held perception in both the Roman Catholic and Anglican Communions. It is a major hindrance to the diaconate in general and the female diaconate in particular. Arguably, then, the crux of the matter is the ending of the transitional diaconate. Despite the welcome revival of the vocational diaconate, as long as the diaconate is also a pre-requisite for the priesthood it will be seen as potentially leading to ordination to the presbyterate instead of as a wholly different order of ministry.

Indeed, in the author's own Anglican experience, some of those supposedly accepted for the vocational, non-stipendiary diaconate, once ordained deacon, have used this as a channel to seek the priesthood and bishops have ordained them as such. The case for abolition of the transitional diaconate, already a strong one, is reinforced by the potential for ordained ministry for women in those Churches which will not accept female priests. Ideally, the diaconate could one day be an order of ministry open to women in Churches of very varied traditions. It is timely, therefore, to turn to the vexed issue of sequential ordination and the transitional diaconate.

Direct Ordination: Once a Deacon, Always a Deacon?

> *Direct ordination, sometimes known as* per saltum *(by a leap), was the universal practice in the early church. In the middle ages, the church gradually introduced a discipline of ordaining persons through a sequence of orders which has continued to the present.*[152]

There is a movement to revive *per saltum* ordination, by ordaining people directly to the priesthood rather than passing them first through the transitional diaconate (some, though not nearly as much, attention has also been paid to *per saltum* ordination to the episcopate). The 1996 Anglican-Lutheran *Hanover Report* encouraged Anglicans to look at this issue: "Such a restoration [of the vocational diaconate] would imply both a reconsideration of the transitional diaconate and the possibility of direct ordination to the priesthood of persons discerned to have presbyteral vocations without their 'passing through' the diaconate. The possibility of such direct ordination is not excluded on historical or theological grounds."[153] A decade earlier, the first *Truly Called* report of the Scottish Episcopal Church had challenged the prevailing view that the transitional diaconate should be retained: "patristic texts do not support the thesis that candidates for the Priesthood ought first be ordained to the Diaconate."[154]

---

[151] *Women in Ministry*, 12.

[152] Edwin F. Hallenbeck, ed., *The Orders of Ministry, Reflections on Direct Ordination* (Providence, RI: North American Association for the Diaconate, 1996), 9. We are indebted to this compilation of writings for the remarks which follow.

[153] *The Hanover Report*, 22.

[154] *Truly Called by God to Serve as a Deacon*, 17-18.

Historical Overview

A digression into what is, on the surface, an arcane topic of church order in fact sheds much light on the key issues of ordination in general and the diaconate in particular. Direct ordination, as we have already seen, applied to the episcopate as well as the presbyterate in the early Church: lay people could be ordained to any of the three orders of ministry. For example, Cyprian of Carthage was ordained presbyter in 257 without having been a deacon. Athanasius was directly ordained bishop of Alexandria in 328. In 374, Ambrose was baptized and then directly ordained bishop of Milan. Augustine was ordained directly to the presbyterate in 391. However, "sequential" ordination began in the fourth century and gradually became generalized over the next five centuries, although both practices continued side-by-side until as late as the tenth century. The main reason for electing bishops from the presbyterate was to ensure adequate episcopal preparation and training, although the diaconate could, and on occasion did, serve the same purpose. There was not the same rationale for presbyters to first be deacons and the practice emerged much later. It became codified from the tenth century as canonical practice, although in theory it was not required for priestly ordination.

The episcopate was another matter altogether. According to the teaching of Thomas Aquinas (13th century), it was basically a derivative of the presbyterate – priestly power was essential for the bishop to function as a eucharistic presider. Hence, deacons elected as bishops would require prior ordination to the presbyterate. (This was the reverse of the early Church's practice where the bishop delegated his authority, such as eucharistic presidency, to the presbyters.) Thus, what began as a practical system of training ended up as a theological requirement.[155] Deacon Ormonde Plater made a distinction between "sequential" ordination, a form of preparation, and "cumulative" ordination, the mediaeval theology of incorporating all three orders through sequential ordination.[156]

Sequential Ordination Today

Some contemporary supporters of the diaconate, especially in the Church of England, continue to hold this view. "You are a deacon first and even if later you become a priest or a bishop, you never cease to be a deacon," says the 2003 report for the Diocese of Salisbury.[157] This continues in a subsequent book, *Being a Deacon Today*, by the report's chairperson, Rosalind Brown, written in part, says Bishop David Stancliffe in its Foreword, for "all those who are already deacons but are inclined to forget it – the priests and bishops of our Church."[158] There is support for this view in the Roman Catholic tradition, where, as in Anglicanism, ordination is seen as permanent. "Ordination always affects the one ordained *permanently*," says Deacon William Ditewig. "When a 'transitional' deacon is later ordained to the priesthood, […] he does not *cease* being a deacon, any more than a priest later ordained bishop *ceases* being a priest." In his effort to counter the entrenched perception that the diaconate is temporary, Ditewig makes the point that there is "only one Order of Deacons;" there are not "two diaconates, one transitional and one permanent."[159] Deacon James Keating states that "becoming a deacon is a prerequisite to the priesthood [...] There can be no sacrifice (priesthood without service (diaconate)." He quotes Pope Benedict XVI as saying in 2008 "Every priest, of course, continues as a deacon."[160] Referring to the theory of cumulative ordination, another Roman Catholic writer, Susan K. Wood, sees the deacon as participating in the *diakonia* of the bishop:

---

[155] A good historical explanation is found in the chapter by Canadian scholar John St. H. Gibaut, "Sequential Ordination in Historical Perspective: A Response to J. Robert Wright," in *The Orders of Ministry,* 73-95.

[156] "Through the Dust – Patristic Presbyterianism," in *The Orders of Ministry,* 97-98.

[157] *The Distinctive Diaconate*, 6.

[158] *Being a Deacon Today,* viii.

[159] William T. Ditewig, *101 Questions and Answers on Deacons*, 26, 27.

[160] James Keating, *The Heart of the Diaconate*, 2-3.

> When viewed from the perspective of the bishop's ordination to the fullness of the sacrament of orders, the bishop is the one who first and foremost bears responsibility for the diaconal service in his diocese. The deacon in his ordination to the diaconate actually shares in the diaconal responsibility which is first the bishop's responsibility.[161]

The 2007 Church of England report *The Mission and Ministry of the Whole Church.*suggested that deacons, even those "impatient to be priests," should be required by their bishop to spend longer than one year in the diaconate "in order to live more fully into that calling. […] For some, diaconal ministry would be an ongoing commitment: their ministry would find its fulfilment in the distinctive diaconate. For others, the diaconate would lead, perhaps after a period several years, to ordination to the presbyterate."

The arguments against *per saltum* ordination generally go as follows: a bishop needs to have been a priest, and a priest to have been a deacon, so that (a) in practical terms they acquire adequate experience and knowledge (sequential ordination), and (b) they may fulfil their ministries symbolically and sacramentally (cumulative ordination). Defenders of cumulative ordinations claim, for example, that they "make the role of the priests ampler and more intelligible both to themselves and to those they serve. Those who offer Eucharist must first offer themselves. It is appropriate that priests should be first deacons,"[162] and that "ordaining is the distinctive vocation of the bishop precisely because the order of the episcopate alone is understood to contain within itself the other two orders of which the bishop is chief minister at ordination."[163]

Countering the practical argument for sequential ordination, Ormonde Plater pointed out that the rationale for the parish priesthood as preparation for the episcopate scarcely applies to the contemporary presbyterate: "Six months as a transitional deacon […] doesn't make one a logical choice for priest […] [it is] too short a time in the wrong office."[164] As for the symbolic or sacramental argument for cumulative orders, we have already emphasized that *baptism*, not ordination, is the source of the Church's ministry of service. "The order of *diakonos*, of deacon, is a specific, designated ministry […] *Diakonia*, or service, on the other hand, is a basic aspect of the vocation of every Christian…"[165] "It is important not to make passage through the order of deacon the sole guarantee of a person's fidelity to the universal Christian vocation to service, *diakonia*. Baptism, not ordination as a deacon, should be seen as the source of a priest's or a bishop's commitment to service."[166] To the hackneyed phrase justifying cumulative ordination, "once a deacon, always a deacon," the response could be: when ordained priest, one leaves the order of deacons for the order of presbyters – but retains baptismal *diakonia.*

History, tradition, and solidarity with other episcopal Churches seem to be the real reasons for maintaining sequential ordination. An attempt to permit direct ordination in the Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. was blocked by its House of Bishops at the General Convention in Denver in 2000. "It would be a grave mistake to change something that the Catholic Church has held for a very long time," said one bishop. Another brought up the old chestnut of the diaconate as preparation for the priesthood: "Would any of you have wanted to serve as a bishop without having first gained experience as a priest?"

---

[161] Susan K. Wood, S.C.L., "Conclusion: Convergence Points toward a Theology of Ordered Ministries," in Susan K. Wood, ed., *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood: Theologies of Lay and Ordained Ministry*, 262.
[162] Charles P. Price, "The Threefold Cord: A Case for Cumulative Ordination," in *The Orders of Ministry,* 24.
[163] J. Robert Wright, "Sequential or Cumulative Orders vs. Direct Ordination," in ibid., 50.
[164] "Through the Dust," in ibid., 98.
[165] Louis Weil, in ibid., 63.
[166] Elizabeth J. Smith, "Response to Louis Veil," in ibid., 68.

The direct ordination movement in the Episcopal Church, once active, seems to have faltered. Methodist observer David Clark comments that "the Episcopal Church is still struggling with the distorting legacy of a transitional diaconate, and the hierarchical model of ordained ministry which this inevitably perpetuates."[167]

Abolition of the transitional diaconate may be logical, historically justifiable and theologically sound. But given a thousand-year history, the difficulty of reaching a consensus in the Anglican Communion, and ecumenical implications, it is unlikely in the foreseeable future. And yet there are stirrings in the Roman Catholic Church. William Ditewig notes that

> Some theologians are beginning to suggest that since the vocation of the seminarian is properly to the priesthood and not to the diaconate, and because a transitional diaconate no longer seems to be serving the real pastoral and practical needs of the people of God, the practice should be discontinued.

Referring to vision of the Second Vatican Council and of Pope John Paul II for the diaconal role of the whole Church, Deacon Ditewig says that

> If this conciliar and papal vision is ever to reach its full potential, these theologians suggest that retaining a vestige of the cursus honorum – in which all ordained ministry is to be interpreted and find its fulfilment within the priesthood – is an anachronism that ought to be stopped.

While acknowledging that other theologians argue for the retention of the transitional diaconate, Ditewig points out that "whether the Church continues to ordain transitional deacons or not is within her authority to adjust or adapt, just as was done with tonsure, the minor orders, and the subdiaconate."[168] Elsewhere, he says "the use of one sacramental order as a necessary prerequisite to another is a pattern that, as a minimum, is no longer absolute and should be most closely examined."[169] Other Roman Catholic writers agree. Susan K. Wood proposes "abandoning a transitional diaconate as a sacramental prerequisite to presbyteral ordination."[170] Richard Gaillardetz reminds us that "the ancient tradition in no way presupposed that one must advance from one ordained ministry to the next." He argues that "the existence of a 'transitional diaconate' risks denigrating diaconal ministry by reducing it to a kind of pastoral internship or field education assignment."[171]

The ending of the transitional diaconate is thus not inconceivable. Ideally, one day, Churches with the historic three-fold ministry of bishop, priest or presbyter, and deacon will, like the Lutheran Church of Sweden, ordain directly to the priesthood – and perhaps even, like the early Church, to the episcopate. In the meantime, the vocational diaconate must persevere alongside an anachronism.

Conclusion

The transitional diaconate is one of the hindrances to revival of the order of deacons. It is a hindrance, however, that we should simply bypass. What we *can* do is promote the "distinctive" diaconate – as a permanent vocation for locally-raised-up, non-stipendiary ministry, and occasionally

---

.[167] David Clark, letter, March 2017.

[168] *101 Questions and Answers on Deacons*, 27-28.

[169] *The Emerging Diaconate: Servant Leaders in a Servant Church* (New York: Paulist Press, 2007), 135.

[170] Susan K. Wood, S.C.L., *Sacramental Orders* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 166-171.

[171] Richard R. Gaillardetz, "On the Theological Integrity of the Diaconate," in Cummings, Ditewig and Gallardetz, *Theology of the Diaconate: The State of the Question* (New York: Paulist Press, 2005), 71.

for professionally-trained stipendiary ministry too. A ministry symbolic of the *diakonia* of all believers, just as the presbyterate symbolizes the priesthood of all believers. An order which primarily enables and encourages lay ministry. An order which is representational of the Church outside the Church and helps carry out its mission beyond the gathered community. Part of the problem for the diaconate has been simply the lack of deacons: if people don't know what deacons are, there is no momentum to ordain more. On the other hand, the best argument for the diaconate is the presence and example of deacons. The diaconate will always rebound. It is resilient and irrepressible. It is, after all, an ancient form of ministry, rooted in the later New Testament, developing in the early Church and prospering in the first five centuries, in some cases the first millennium – and without interruption in the Orthodox Churches. Despite a thousand years of neglect in the western Church, it survived and has revived. As a 1989 Anglican Church of Canada report said,

> *There's a deacon-shaped hole in the Church, waiting to be filled by people whose example and experience will initiate, encourage, and give leadership to the diaconate of the whole people of God. By raising up such people as deacons or servant-leaders, the Church can breathe new life into an ancient order, making it an equal but different form of ministry.*[172]

Across the Anglican Communion, as in the Roman Catholic, Lutheran and other Churches, there is a re-awakening, a sometimes slow and uneven re-emergence, of the diaconate. We see it in the Anglican Church of Canada after a series of setbacks which disappointed and frustrated but did not deter the diaconal movement. This is no coincidence. In the third millennium, the Holy Spirit is stirring us to make new and innovative uses of the ancient Order of Deacons.

Bibliography

* Available online from the Association of Episcopal Deacons: www.episcopaldeacons.org

1. History and Theology of the Diaconate

Barnett, James Monroe. *The Diaconate: A Full and Equal Order*, Revised Edition. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995.

Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry. Geneva: World Council of Churches, Faith and Order Paper No. 111, 1982 (available online).

Booty, John E. *The Servant Church: Diaconal Ministry and the Episcopal Church*. Wilton, CT: Morehouse, 1982.

Cerrato, Dominic. *In the Person of Christ the Servant: A Theology of the Diaconate Based on the Personalist Thought of Pope John Paul II*. Bloomingdale, Ohio: St. Ephraem Press, 2014.

Chryssavgis. John. *Remembering and Reclaiming Diakonia: The Diaconate Yesterday and Today*. Brookline, MS: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2006.

Collins, John N. *Deacons and the Church: Making connections between old and new*. Leominster: Gracewing; Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse, 2002.

_____ *Diakonia: Re-interpreting the Ancient Sources*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.

---

[172] *A Plan to Restore the Diaconate in the Anglican Church of Canada*, 3.

_____ *Diakonia Studies: Critical Issues in Ministry*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Cummings, Owen F. *Deacons and the Church*. New York: Paulist Press, 2004.

_____ *The Emerging Diaconate: Servant Leader in a Servant Church*. New York: Paulist Press, 2007.

Cummings, Owen F., William T. **Ditewig**, and Richard R. **Gaillardetz.** *Theology of the Diaconate: The State of the Question*. New York: Paulist Press, 2005.

Ditewig, William T. *101 Questions and Answers on Deacons*. New York: Paulist Press, 2004.

Echlin, Edward P., SJ. *The Deacon in the Church: Past and Future*. New York: Alba House, 1971.

Epting, Susanne Watson. *Unexpected Consequences: The Diaconate Renewed*. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse, 2015.

***Grein**, Richard F. *Baptism and the Ministry of Deacons*. Providence, RI: North American Association for the Diaconate, Monograph Series No. 1, 1987.

_____ *The Renewal of the Diaconate and the Ministry of the Laos.* Providence, RI: North American Association for the Diaconate, Monograph Series No. 3, 1991.

Hall, Christine, ed. *The Deacon's Ministry*. Leominster: Gracewing, 1992.
Hallenbeck, Edwin F., ed. *The Orders of Ministry. Reflections on Direct Ordination.* Providence, RI: North American Association for the Diaconate, 1996.

Hilberath, Berd Jochen, and Rob **Mascini**, eds. *Diakonia and Diaconate as an Ecumenical Challenge*. Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2006.

Jackson, D. Michael, ed. *The Diaconate in Ecumenical Perspective.* Durham, Sacristy Press, 2019.

***Jeske**, Richard L. *The Role of the Deacon and the Unity of the Church*. Providence, RI: North American Association for the Diaconate, Monograph Series No. 13, 2002.

Keating, James. *The Deacon Reader*. New York: Paulist Press, 2006.

Maybee, Maylanne. "The State of the Diaconate in the Anglican Church of Canada," in Richard Leggett, ed., *A Companion to the Waterloo Declaration: Commentary and Essays on Lutheran Anglican Relations in Canada*. Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1999.

***McArver**, Susan Wilds. *What Was Happening in Nineteenth-Century Germany That Ignited Diakonia?* Providence, RI: North American Association for the Diaconate, Monograph Series No. 18, 2007.

***McCoy**, W. Keith. *The Deacon as a Para-Cleric*. Providence, RI: North American Association for the Diaconate, Monograph Series No. 9, 1998.

McKnight, W. Shawn. *Understanding the Diaconate: Historical, Theological, and Sociological Foundations.* Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2018.

Müller, Gerhard Ludwig. *Priesthood and Diaconate: The Recipient of the Sacrament of Holy Orders from the Perspective of Creation Theology and Christology*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002.

Osborne, Kenan B., O.F.M. *The Permanent Diaconate: Its History and Place in the Sacrament of Orders*. New York: Paulist Press, 2007.

Plater, Ormonde. *Deacons in the Episcopal Church*. Boston: North American Association for the Diaconate, 1988.

_____ ed.,* *Historic Documents on the Diaconate*. Revised second printing. Providence, RI: North American Association for the Diaconate, Monograph Series No. 7, 1999.

_____ *Many Servants: An Introduction to Deacons*. Revised Edition. Cambridge, MS: Cowley Publications, 2004 (First Edition, 1991).

***Vena**, Osvaldo D. *Gospel Images of Jesus as Deacon: Upsetting the Hierarchies of His Culture*. Providence, RI: North American Association for the Diaconate, Monograph Series No. 14, 2003.

***Willetts**, John W. *Deacon as Learner and Mentor for Today's Church*. Providence, RI: North American Association for the Diaconate, Monograph Series, 2005.

Wood, Susan K., S.C.L. *Sacramental Orders*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2000.

Young, Francis. *Inferior Office? A History of Deacons in the Church of England.* Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2015.

2. Women and the Diaconate

Fitzgerald, Kyriaki Karidoyanes. *Women Deacons in the Orthodox Church: Called to Holiness and Ministry*. Brookline, MS: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1999.

Gryson, Roger. *The Ministry of Women in the Early Church*. Translated by Jean Laporte and Mary ..Louise Hall from French original, *Le ministère des femmes dans l'Église ancienne*. Recherches d'histoire 4 (Gembloux: J. Duculot, 1972). Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1976.

Macy, Gary, William T. **Ditewig**, and Phyllis **Zagano**. *Women Deacons: Past, Present, Future*. New York: Paulist Press, 2012.

Madigan, Kevin, and Carolyn **Osiek**, eds. and translators. *Ordained Women in the Early Church: A Documentary History*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005.

Martimort, Aimé Georges. *Deaconesses: An Historical Study*. Translated by K.D. Whitehead from French original, *Les Diaconesses: Essai historique* (Rome: C.L.V. Edizioni Liturgiche, 1982). San Franciso: Ignatius Press, 1986.

Vagaggini, Cipriano. *Ordination of Women to the Diaconate in the Eastern Churches.* Edited by Phyllis Zagano. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2013.

Wijngaards, John. *The Ordained Women Deacons of the Church's First Millennium.* Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2011.

_____ *The Ordination of Women in the Catholic Church: Unmasking a Cuckoo's Egg Tradition*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd; New York: Continuum, 2001.

_____ *Women Deacons in the Early Church: Historical Texts and Contemporary Debates*. Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2005; New York: Crossroad, 2006.

Zagano, Phyllis. *Holy Saturday: An Argument for the Restoration of the Female Diaconate in the Catholic Church*. New York: Crossroad, 2000.

_____ *Women & Catholicism: Gender, Communion, and Authority*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

_____ ed. *Women Deacons? Essays with Answers.* Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2016.

_____ *Women in Ministry: Emerging Questions about the Diaconate.* New York: Paulist Press, 2012.

3. Ministry and Formation

Borgegard, Gunnel, and Christine **Hall**. *The Ministry of the Deacon*. Upsala: Nordic Ecumenical Council, 1999.

Brown, Rosalind. *Being a Deacon Today. Exploring a distinctive ministry in the Church and in the World.* Norwich: Canterbury Press; Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse, 2005.

Buelt, Edward L. *A New Friendship: The Spirituality and Ministry of the Deacon*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2011.

Clark, David. *Building Kingdom Communities – with the diaconate as a new order of mission*. Peterborough, UK: Upfront Publishing, 2016.

_____. *The gift of a renewed diaconate and the contribution of British Methodism*. Peterborough, UK: Upfront Publishing, 2018.

Cormier, Jay. *The Deacon's Ministry of the Word*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2016.

Ditewig, William T. *The Deacon's Ministry of Charity and Justice*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2015.
_____ ed. *Forming Deacons: Ministers of Soul and Leaven*. New York: Paulist Press, 2010.

_____ *To Be and to Serve: The Ministerial Identity of the Deacon*. St. Meinrad IN: Abbey Press Publications, 2015.

Epting, Susanne Watson. "Common Views and Common Mission," *Anglican Theological Review*, Vol. 92, Winter 2010.
_____ **Prophetic Voice of the Deacon.* Providence, RI: North American Association for the Diaconate, Monograph Series No. 19, 2008.

***Ferguson**, Thomas. *Lifting Up the Servants of God: The Deacon, Servant Ministry, and the Future of the Church*. Providence, RI: North American Association for the Diaconate, Monograph Series No. 12, 2008.

***Hallenback**, Edwin F., ed. *Guidelines for Deacon Programs*. Second Edition. Providence, RI: North American Association for the Diaconate, 2002.

Henderson, Silas S., ed. *Serving with Joy: Lessons from Pope Francis for Catholic Deacons Today*. St. Meinrad IN: Abbey Press Publications, 2016.

Hughes, Alfred C., Frederick F. **Campbell**, and William T. **Ditewig**. *Today's Deacon: Contemporary Issues and Cross-Currents.* New York: Paulist Press, 2006.

Kasper, Walter. "The Diaconate," in *Leadership in the Church: How Traditional Roles Can Serve the Christian Community Today*. New York: Crossroad, 2003.

Keating, James. *A Deacon's Retreat.* New York: Paulist Press, 2010.

_____ ed. *The Character of the Deacon: Spiritual and Pastoral Foundations*. New York: Paulist Press, 2017.

_____ *The Heart of the Diaconate: Communion with the Servant Mysteries of Christ.* New York: Paulist Press, 2015.

Maybee, Maylanne (ed.). *All Who Minister: New Ways of Serving God's People.* Toronto: ABC Publishing, 2001.

McCaslin, Patrick, and Michael G. **Lawler**. *Sacrament of Service: A Vision of the Permanent Diaconate Today*. New York: Paulist Press, 1986.

Orton, Andrew, and Todd Stockdale. *Making Connections: Exploring Methodist Deacons' Perspectives on Contemporary Diaconal Ministry*. Durham, UK: Sacristy Press, 2014.

***Plater**, Ormonde, ed. *Deacons in the Episcopal Church: Guidelines on their selection, training, and ministry*. Providence, RI: North American Association for the Diaconate, 1991.

Robinson, Denis, OSB, ed. *Ordained to Serve: Prayers and Blessings for Permanent Deacons*. St. Meinrad IN: Abbey Press Publications, 2011.

Shugrue, Timothy J. *Service Ministry of the Deacon*. United States National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1988.

***Watson**, Susanne K. *Formation of Ministering Christians*. Providence, RI: North American Association for the Diaconate, Monograph Series No. 11, 1999.

***Williams**, Louise. *Growing in Ministry: Formation for Diaconal Service.* Providence, RI: North American Association for the Diaconate, Monograph Series 1999.

Zagano, Phyllis. *Called to Serve. A Spirituality for Deacons*. Liguori, MO: Ligouri Publications, 2004.

4. Liturgy and Worship

The Alternative Service Book, 1980. Cambridge University Press; Colchester: William Clowes; London: SPCK, 1980.

The Book of Alternative Services of the Anglican Church of Canada. Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1985.

The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, According to the use of The Anglican Church of Canada. Cambridge University Press, 1959.

The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, According to the use of The Episcopal Church. The Church Hymnal Corporation and the Seabury Press, 1977.

Common Worship: Services and Prayers of the Church of England. London: Church House Publishing, 2000.

The First and Second Prayer Books of King Edward the Sixth. London & Toronto: J.M. Dent; New York: E.P. Dutton, Everyman's Library 448, 1927.

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal, Canadian edition. Ottawa: Publications Service, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011.

Public Distribution of Holy Communion by Deacons and Lay Persons. Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1987.

Revised Common Lectionary, Episcopal Edition. Wichita, KS: St. Mark's Press, 2015.

Bauerschmidt, Frederick C. *The Deacon's Ministry of the Liturgy*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2016.

Blakley, J. Ted. *A Lector's Guide & Commentary to the Revised Common Lectionary*. 3 volumes. Wichita, KS: St. Mark's Press. Year A, 2010; Year B, 2011; Year C, 2009.

Ditewig, William T. *The Deacon at Mass: A Theological and Pastoral Guide*. Second Edition. New York: Paulist Press, 2013.

Hefling, Charles. *What Do We Bless And Why?* Providence, RI: North American Association for the Diaconate, Monograph Series No. 15, 2003.

Jackson, D. Michael. *The Deacon in the Worshipping Community*. Diocese of Qu'Appelle, 2019. https://quappelle.anglican.ca/assets/docs/The_Deacon_in_the_Worshipping_Community.pdf

Kwatera, Michael, O.S.B. *Come to the Feast: Liturgical Theology of, by, and for Everybody.* Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2006.

_____. *The Liturgical Ministry of Deacons*. 2nd Revised Edition. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005.

_____. *Preparing the General Intercessions*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996.

Marchesi, Graziano, ed., et alii. *Workbook for Lectors, Gospel Readers, and Proclaimers of the Word*. Canadian Edition, in 3 volumes (years A, B, C). Boston: Liturgy Training Publications, and Ottawa: Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. Published annually.

Pecklers, Keith F., SJ. *Worship: A Primer in Christian Ritual*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003.

Plater, Ormonde. *Deacons in the Liturgy*, Second Edition. New York: Church Publishing, 2009 (First Edition, 1992).

_____ *Intercessions: A Theological and Practical Guide*. Boston: Cowley Publications, 1995.

_____ **Music and Deacons*. Providence, RI: North American Association for the Diaconate, Monograph Series No. 8, 1995.

Ramshaw, Gail, ed. *Intercessions for the Christian People*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1990.

Robinson, Denis, OSB, ed. *Ordained to Serve: Prayers and Blessings for Permanent Deacons*. St. Meinrad IN: Abbey Press Publications, 2015.

5. Reports

The Diaconate as Ecumenical Opportunity. The Hanover Report of the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission. Published for the Anglican Consultative Council and the Lutheran World Federation. London: Anglican Communion Publications, 1996 (available online).

To Love and Serve the Lord: Diakonia in the Life of the Church. The Jerusalem Report of the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission. Lutheran World Federation and Anglican Communion, 2012 (available online).

"The Diaconate as a Distinct Order of Ministry," in *The Official Report of the Lambeth Conference, 1998*. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse, 1999.

The Distinctive Diaconate. A Report to the Board of Ministry, the Diocese of Salisbury. Salisbury: Sarum College Press, 2003.

For such a time as this. A renewed diaconate in the Church of England. A report to the General Synod of the Church of England of a Working Party of the House of Bishops. London: Church House Publishing, 2001.

The Iona Report: The Diaconate in the Anglican Church of Canada. Toronto: The General Synod, The Anglican Church of Canada, 2016. www.anglican.ca/diaconate

The Mission and Ministry of the Whole Church: Biblical, theological and contemporary perspectives. Church of England Faith and Order Advisory Group. London: General Synod, 2007.

A Plan to Restore the Diaconate in the Anglican Church of Canada. General Synod Committee on Ministry. Toronto: Anglican Church of Canada, 1989 (available online).

Truly Called by God to Serve as a Deacon, The Report of the Bishops Working Group on Distinctive Diaconate. Edinburgh: General Synod Office, Scottish Episcopal Church, 1987.

Truly Called…Two. Edinburgh: General Synod Office, Scottish Episcopal Church, 2012.