

# **Suggested Protocols for a Deacon's Funeral**

Revised by the Archdiocesan Office of Deacon Services, August 13, 2013

***“Receive the Gospel of Christ, whose herald you have become. Believe what you read, teach what you believe, and practice what you teach.”***

*Protocols for a Deacon's Funeral* has been drafted to assist families and pastors at a time of intense grief and loss. It is also a time of almost instantaneous decision making when there are just too many often critical choices to make. *The following is not intended to be a document detailing things that must be done. Rather, they are suggestions provided to assist the grieving family, the already overburdened pastor, and the Diaconal Community.*

- I. As soon as a deacon passes someone should notify the Deacon Services Office as soon as possible. The Director, or his designee, will immediately start the process of notifications that are required, i.e. Archbishop, Auxiliary Bishop(s), Vicar for Clergy, Moderator of the Curia, Chancellor of the Archdiocese, Catholic Herald etc. He will also notify the Deacon Community as well as prepare the Archdiocesan obituary and distribute same.
- II. The Director, or his designee, will contact the family to offer whatever support he can and which they request. One item will be a copy of this protocol or suggestions from it. He will work with the family if needed in planning the funeral and with any other related needs. He will make the initial call to any and all deacons whom the family would like to have directly involved in the Mass.
- III. The Director, or his designee, will contact the pastor or parish director of the deacon's assigned parish to offer assistance. He will offer to e-mail a copy of this document to the pastor or parish director immediately. He will also go through the following items with the pastor or parish director over the telephone at the time of the call. He will offer the pastor or parish director any assistance he is able to because of the nature of this unique funeral service.
- IV. Suggested Procedures for the Family:
  - a. Let the family know that it is a good idea to have one or more of the deacon's classmates assisting as deacon(s) of the funeral Mass.

- b. Let them know sometimes the family likes to have a deacon(s) as one or more of the pallbearers.
- c. Let the family know that because of a deacon's close relationship to the Gospels, that the Book of the Gospels should be used and placed on the casket on top of the pall. They can be instructed that the Deacon of the Word at the Mass will come to the casket and pick up the Book of the Gospels for the Gospel proclamation after he receives the blessing from the presider. After the Gospel proclamation, the deacon will return the Book of the Gospels to the casket. The Book of the Gospels remains in this place of honor until the end of the Mass and is removed just prior to the removal of the pall for the recessional procession.
- d. Advise the family that if needed the attending deacons will be happy to assist with the distribution of the Eucharist at Communion time.
- e. The Deacon of the Word will lead the Prayers of the Faithful unless the family would prefer children or grandchildren of the deceased deacon.

V. Suggested protocols for the Pastor or Parish Director:

- a. The Director, or his designee, will contact, and will remain in contact as needed, with the pastor or parish director as needed. He will let the pastor or parish director know if the Archbishop will be attending and vesting for the Mass. Or, who will be attending and participating in the Mass representing the archbishop, e.g. auxiliary bishop, vicar for clergy, associate director for Deacon Services, or other designated person. He will also remind the pastor or parish director that parking space(s) may need to be reserved for the archbishop. He will also, if need be, assist the archbishop or his designee in greeting the family, vesting, etc.
- b. He will let the pastor or parish director know what is needed and normally done by the Diaconal Community for a deacon's funeral.
  - 1. A room separate from the place where the Mass will be held yet close to that location needs to be reserved. It needs to be large enough to hold a good number of deacons, their vestments and coats, etc. The room should be one that can be secured to prevent the loss of personal items of the deacon participants.

2. A number of pews will need to be reserved. The suggested number will be dependent upon the time of day the Mass is held. Another consideration might be the deceased's involvement or visibility within the Diaconal Community. Note: In the past there have been 25 deacons, wives and widows. At other times there have been 100 deacons, wives and widows. Flexibility is the key.
3. The attending deacons, after vesting and shortly before the beginning of the Mass, will line up in a column of twos. Their wives, if applicable, and/or widows of deacons, will also join the vested deacons for the procession into the church.
4. The diaconal assembly will follow the cross and candles (if used) into the church preceding the casket and family members. If the casket is already in the church in its place in front of the altar, the diaconal procession will follow the cross and candles (if used) into the church before any con-celebrants, the Deacons of the Mass, the Deacon of the Word carrying the Book of the Gospels, and then the principal celebrant. Each pair of two members of the Deacon Community will stop before the sanctuary, bow, and then proceed directly into a pew reserved for their use.
5. The pastor or parish director needs to know that the Book of the Gospels will be used for the Mass. He/she will also be advised that the Book of the Gospels will be placed on the casket after the pall is placed on it. If the deceased deacon's parish does not possess a Book of the Gospels, the Deacon Services Office should be notified and it will provide a Book of the Gospels.
6. He/she will need to know that the Deacon of the Word will go to the casket to obtain the Book of the Gospels after receiving the blessing. The Deacon of the Word will proclaim the Gospel of the Mass from the Book of the Gospels. After proclaiming the Gospel the Deacon of the Word will return the Book of the Gospels to its place on the pall covering the casket. He will then return to his seat. If the Deacon of the Word is also the homilist, he will return the Book of the Gospels to its place on the pall covering the casket after the homily. He does so after the homily as he may want to

refer to it and/or use it as a part of, or symbol of, the deceased deacon's ministry.

7. The Deacon of the Word will lead the Prayers of the Faithful unless the family would prefer adult children or adult grandchildren of the deceased deacon.
8. The Deacon of the Eucharist will prepare the altar. The Deacon of the Word may assist with this. The Deacon of the Eucharist will then receive the gifts from the family's designees. If the presider is close to the deacon and his family, he may go with the Deacon of the Eucharist to receive the gifts.
9. The Deacon(s) of the Mass will assist with the distribution of the Eucharist under both species. As ordinary ministers of the Eucharist it is preferable that they do so because of their diaconal and clerical relationship to the Eucharist.

(As required by canon 910, and the Papal documents *Redemptionis Sacramentum* and *Ecclesiae de Mysterio*, ordinary ministers of Holy Communion [bishops, priests, deacons] must be used rather than lay ministers whenever there are sufficient numbers of ordinary ministers present. This would especially pertain to funerals of deacons when the diaconal community assembles for the funeral liturgy. Communion stations can be assigned to the deacons prior to Mass.)

10. At the end of the Mass as the pall bearers are called to come to the casket by the funeral home representatives, the seated Deacon Community members will leave their pews and proceed in twos to the main aisle behind the casket, on the end opposite the sanctuary. In twos they will face the altar and bow. They will then proceed out or to the rear of the main aisle. As the cross bearer leads the recessional procession out to the waiting hearse, the Deacon Community will form an honor guard on both sides of the aisle, or out through the nave/lobby area, and to the waiting casket if weather permits). They will remain in their places within the honor guard until the casket is placed into the hearse.
11. The pastor or parish director will have to have designated someone to unlock the room where the deacons vested so they can change out of their vestments and regain any personal property.

12. The presider should use the funeral Mass prayers specifically for a deacon (Roman Missal, Catholic Book edition, page 1252, see below). There are separate funeral masses for a pope, diocesan bishop, priest, deacon, religious.
13. Casket should be placed in the same position deceased occupied in the worshipping assembly: for clerics, head at altar steps with feet pointing toward the assembly.

1252 MASSES FOR THE DEAD

**4. For a Deacon**

<b>COLLECT</b>	<b>Grant, we pray, O merciful God, a share in eternal happiness to the soul of N., your servant and Deacon, on whom you bestowed the gift of ministering in your Church. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.</b>
<b>PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS</b>	<b>Be gracious, O Lord, to N., your servant and Deacon, for whose salvation we offer you this sacrifice, that, as in the flesh he ministered to Christ your Son, so he may rise up with your faithful servants to everlasting glory. Through Christ our Lord.</b>
<b>PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION</b>	<b>Replenished with these sacred gifts, we humbly entreat you, O Lord, graciously to grant through this sacrifice that N., your servant and Deacon, whom you called to be among those who serve your Church, once freed from the bonds of death, may receive a share with those who have ministered well, and enter into your joy. Through Christ our Lord.</b>

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