



St. Mary & St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church
Edmonton, AB



COPTIC ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE
Diocese of Mississauga, Vancouver and Western Canada

Deaconship Ranks, Responsibilities, and Ordination Guidelines

**Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate
Diocese of Mississauga, Vancouver, and Western Canada**

St. Mary and St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

St. Habib Girgis School of Deacons/Deaconesses (HGSD)

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This booklet presents the general guidelines for deaconship service in the Coptic Orthodox Church of St Mary and St Mark, Edmonton, Alberta. The booklet and its contents are being developed and used by St. Habib Girgis School of Deacons/Deaconesses (HGSD) to administer deacon ordinations and general deacon guidelines.

The booklet starts with an introduction to the deaconship service and then gives a detailed description of each deaconship rank. The description includes the qualifications required for ordination, the general duties performed by the rank, the uniform appropriate for the rank, an overview of the rite of the ordination, then special notes on the responsibilities and the ordination of each rank. The last section of the booklet lists the general guidelines for deacons to attend church and serve in the sanctuary. May this booklet be a source of blessings and a reason for the salvation of many.

HGSD Administrative Team

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Introduction

"Deacon" is a Syrian word that means servant. In Greek, it is "Diakon". The deacon's main job is to help the priest or bishop in his religious service. The first church appointed seven deacons, who were filled with the Holy Spirit and wisdom, "Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said... therefore brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." (Acts 6:2-3). "whom they set before the apostles, and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them." (Acts 6:6)

Our teacher St. Paul listed some qualifications for the deacon in his first epistle to his disciple Timothy, chapter 3: Likewise deacons must be:

- ❖ reverent
- ❖ not double tongued
- ❖ not given too much wine
- ❖ not greedy for money
- ❖ holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience
- ❖ ruling their children and their own houses well
- ❖ they should be tested first, and then, if they pass the test, they are to serve.

Being a deacon is the first and least rank in the priesthood ranks, St. Paul praises it saying, "For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." (1 Tim 3:13)

There are 5 ranks of deacons:

- A. Chanter (Epsaltos)
- B. Reader (Anagnostes)
- C. Subdeacon (Epi-diakon)
- D. Deacon (Diakon)
- E. Archdeacon

A. Chanter (Epsaltos)

Epsaltos is derived from the Coptic word "Psalmos", meaning psalm or hymn. Children may be ordained Chanters (Epsaltos), according to the Psalm: "Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have ordained strength" (Psalm 8:2). The idea of ordaining children is getting them attached to the church at an early age, so they might grow up learning the faith, rites, and doctrine of the Orthodox Church. In addition to the high spirituality and holiness which they will attain while being in the church, thus the saying: "But I am like a green olive tree in the house I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever" (Ps 52:8) might be fulfilled in them.

Qualifications

The Coptic Orthodox male members who are nominated for ordination to the rank of Chanter (Epsaltos) must meet the following minimum requirements:

Age, Attendance and General Conduct

- ❖ 6 years or older
- ❖ At least 6 months of attending the deacons classes with 80% attendance rate
- ❖ Regular confession, communion, church & sunday school attendance
- ❖ Proper attire and general appearance

Knowledge of Rites

- ❖ General conduct of the deacon: fasting before the liturgy, standing quiet in church, facing the east, entering the church, entering and moving in the altar, taking the blessing of the relics and clergy, etc.
- ❖ Knowledge of basic things in the church: building, oblation bread (korban), censor, icons, candles, iconostasis, etc.
- ❖ How to present the tunic and folding and cleaning of the tunic

Knowledge of Hymns

- ❖ Simple liturgy congregation responses (choose 2 responses)

Knowledge Church History and Dogma

- ❖ Stories of St Habib Girgis and the saint of the class

Memorization

- ❖ One of the Psalms recited while dressing: either Psalm 29 or 92 from Agpeya
- ❖ Lord's Prayer "Our Father"

Coptic Language

- ❖ Coptic Alphabet and reading simple Coptic words
- ❖ Optional: Lord's Prayer in Coptic "Je Peniot"

Duties

- ❖ The main role is learning the church hymns, the Coptic language, and the rites of the church.

Uniform

- ❖ The Chanter wears the tunic (tunia) without the stole (patrachil).

Rites of Ordination

- ❖ After the Reconciliation Prayer in the Holy Liturgy the Hegomen (the eldest priest) or the responsible deacon brings the children to be ordained, so they stand in awe before the altar door. The bishop then comes and gives them advice that suits their age, such as coming regularly to church, attending Sunday School classes, learning the hymns, etc. He also advises them to be quiet in church and not to be naughty in the church, in the street or at home, to be obedient and not to swear or lie, etc., to practice confession and partake in the Holy Communion. The bishop must also receive a verbal promise or a consent from the parents to help the new Chanter (Epsaltos) carry out the advice, and not to prevent him from coming to church under any circumstances. Then he advises the church priest to watch and care for their spiritual life, and follow up with them for confession. He also advises the elder deacons to teach them the hymns and praises of the church, as well as explaining some simple rituals. (It is preferable if he tests them in reciting for example, the "Our Father" prayer, the Creed and some short responses.)
- ❖ After that he starts ordaining them as Chanters:
They bow their heads before him, then he prays on them:
"O Lord Master God the Almighty, the Father of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, we ask and entreat you, O Lover of mankind, your servant(s) standing before you, who came to your One Holy and Apostolic Church, enlighten them with the sweetness of your holy words. Let them chant with understanding - spiritual songs. Let them be worthy to start in faith, worship you in wisdom and purity. Sanctify them. Bless them. Fill them with your fear. Guide them by your powerful angels. Enrich them with every good gift and perfect talent, so that they might live according to your holy blessed will, accepted by you. Let them be called to the perfect growth which is for your Holy Spirit, through your Only Begotten Son our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Glory, honour, dominion and worship are due to you together with Him and the Life-Giving and consubstantial Holy Spirit now and forever. Amen"
- ❖ He signs the first child three crosses without laying his hand while saying the name (...) Chanter (Epsaltos) on the Church of (...),
 - Blessed is the Holy Father the Pantocrator
 - Blessed is His Only Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ
 - Blessed is the Holy Spirit the ParacleteThe Bishop signs the rest of the children in the same way.

- ❖ Then the service garments are presented (the tunic without the stole), so he signs them three times, then they wear them.
- ❖ Once ordained, the children stand in front of the elder deacons, and participate in the responses and tunes of the Holy Liturgy. They partake in the Holy Communion, after the deacons, everyone and their families rejoice. They have to be regular in attending the Holy Liturgy and attending church as they grow up, they get used to worship and virtues, they become saints without blame.

Notes

- ❖ There is no laying of hands, and there is no cutting of the hair during their ordination.

B. Reader (Anagnostes)

Anagnostes (Anagnwtoc) is a Greek word formed of two parts: "Anagnwc" which means "chapter", and "toc" which means "related to him". So it means the chapter related to the reader, or the reader of chapters.

Qualifications

The Coptic Orthodox male members who are nominated for ordination to the rank of Reader (Anagnostes) must meet the following minimum requirements as well as the requirements of the rank of Chanter (Epsaltos):

General Conduct and Spirituality

- ❖ 16 years or older
- ❖ witnessed by everyone for his good deeds and manners
- ❖ recommended by the priest and congregation, without any objection from anybody.
- ❖ tested in good reading with understanding of the Holy Bible
- ❖ practices spiritual virtues and means of grace: confession, Holy Communion, attending the church and reading from the Holy Bible.
- ❖ read and study the bible continuously to be able to teach and read comprehensively
- ❖ practice spiritual exercises with guidance from his father of confession (prayers, fasting, metanoias ...)
- ❖ get used to have his own retreat time (quiet time) daily and annually.
- ❖ ready for the service
- ❖ humble and meek, not to be proud of his voice or service
- ❖ obedient to the priest for all that he asks of him, in order to be an example

Knowledge of Rites

- ❖ Knowledge of the books of the bible
- ❖ deaconship ranks, and the responsibilities of each rank
- ❖ church building symbols and iconostasis
- ❖ structure of the liturgy
- ❖ structure of the Agpeya Prayers
- ❖ rites of the vespers praises (Tasbeha Asheya), vespers (Asheya), morning praises, morning raising of incense (Tasbeha Baker), and the litanies said in matins and vespers.
- ❖ structure of the midnight praises (Tasbeha)

Knowledge of Hymns

- ❖ Altar responses for the Liturgy of St Basil
- ❖ Congregation responses for the annual liturgy
- ❖ Reading one of the epistles or the Acts of the Apostles in Coptic + the Psalm and gospel in annual tune
- ❖ Psalm in Mourning (Paschal) tune
- ❖ two of the 4 canticles, when oushot, and maren ounh

- ❖ Intro to doxologies, doxologies of St. Mary (vespers, midnight, matins) and St. Mark (church saints)
- ❖ Annual verses of the cymbals (watos and adam)
- ❖ ep ouro (procession)
- ❖ 2 hymns for the Glorification of Saints
- ❖ 3 of the major Pascha Week hymns (e.g. Evlogimenos , Agios sad tune, Ke-eperto, Ethvety anastasi, Tai shori, Ti shori, Fai etaf anf, Omonogenes , Gholghotha)

Knowledge of Theology and Church History

- ❖ Ecumenical councils and Orthodox Creed
- ❖ The Holy Trinity, Salvation and Redemption, Incarnation.
- ❖ The 7 sacraments of the Church
- ❖ Monasticism and Church Fathers
- ❖ The history of the church division

Coptic Language

- ❖ Alphabet, and fluent in reading
- ❖ numbers, days, months
- ❖ Our Father “Je-Peniot”
- ❖ Basic Grammar and some vocabulary

Memorization

- ❖ Thanksgiving Prayer, Psalm 50, Psalm 1
- ❖ Introduction to the Orthodox Creed, Orthodox Creed
- ❖ Hail to you, The Trisagion, Holy Holy Holy
- ❖ The Gloria, Let us praise with the Angels, Graciously accord O Lord (12th Hour)
- ❖ Psalms recited while dressing into the tunic (tunia): Psalms 29 (“I will exalt You...”), Psalm 92 (“The Lord has reigned....”)
- ❖ Psalms recited on the way to Church: Psalms 26 (“The Lord is my light...”), 46 (“Clap your hands, ...”) and 121 (“I was glad for those who said to me...”)
- ❖ 2 absolution prayers for agepeya hours

Duties

- ❖ Daily Readings: Reading the daily readings in church: particularly the Epistles in Coptic and English. He should learn the introduction and end of each Epistle in Coptic and English. He should read with clarity and understanding and without mistakes. After reading the Epistle, the Reader (Anagnostes), kneels in front of the altar door, kisses the cross and the priest's hand, showing humility before God and the congregation, so that he might not be proud of his voice or his readings. Note that according to the canons of Nicea, there should be no kneeling during Sundays or the Holy 50 Days of Pentecost.
- ❖ Reading the names of the father Patriarchs, who have reposed in the Lord: After the commemoration of the saints, when the deacon serving inside the altar says: "Let the Readers (Anagnostes) say the names of our saintly fathers the patriarchs who have reposed, may the Lord repose their souls all and forgive us our sins." In the old days, the

names of the Patriarchs were written on many tablets, and after hearing this response, each Reader used to call out some of the names. This is not followed now, but it is encouraged if we return again to this tradition.

- ❖ Singing praises and hymns: He has a duty to learn the church's praises and hymns, and recite them during the Holy Liturgy and midnight praises.
- ❖ Preaching and teaching: As mentioned in ordaining the Reader: "Show your face O Lord, on Your servant standing before You, to teach Your holy sayings, and preach Your holy sayings, and preach your commandments to your people, and teach them your pure words, through which comes salvation of their souls and their redemption." In the commandment it is said to him, "You should learn the books of the Holy Bible, one by one, so that you may be able to teach the congregation." He practices teaching and preaching with the request of the bishop or priest.

Uniform

- ❖ He wears a white tunic because the white colour is appropriate for the service of God, who is dressed in light, and who's white garment shown as light at the transfiguration (Mark 9:3). White colour is also a sign of purity, a characteristic which should in a deacon, and all the other grades of priesthood.
- ❖ He wears the stole (Patrachil) in the form of a cross on his back, with it wrapped around the front as a belt, and with both ends hanging from over his shoulders.
 - "Patrachil" is a Greek word which means a grace or deaconship grade, that is, it is a grace taken by a person and carried on his shoulders.
 - It is in the shape of a cross because he is sharing in carrying the cross with Christ, as He says: "If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." (Matt 16:24)
 - The stole is in the shape of a belt from the front, as a sign of getting ready for service, like John the Baptist, who used to gird his waist.

Rites of Ordination

- ❖ The ordination takes place after the prayer of reconciliation. The nominee stands before the altar without wearing his tunic (holding it folded in his hands) and stole (Patrachil), bowing in meekness and awe before the Lord, ready to carry the honour of the service. The Bishop stands at the altar door, facing the west. Behind him stands those who have nominated him, either priests or people from the congregation, they bow in repentance before the altar on behalf of him. They promise before God and the Bishop to look after him.
- ❖ The Bishop asks the congregation: "Do you agree that he truly deserves this rank?", they answer, "Yes, we approve that he deserves". The Bishop cuts five locks of hair in the sign of the cross: one in the middle of his head, the others on the four sides of his head, while saying: (.....) Reader in the church of (.....) Khen Efran.....Ekez Maro-oot...then he blesses him with the three blessings, after which the congregation says "Amen" after each blessing.
- ❖ Following this, they all line up in front of the Bishop who prays for them and commands them their responsibilities. The Bishop then prays the Thanksgiving Prayer, then offers incense in the four directions. He faces the west while praying: "We ask and entreat you, O

Lord, Master, the Almighty, accept your servant(s), Reader in your church, teach him/them your rights, grant him/them to be worthy to touch the utensils and be an honourable Reader before you.

- ❖ The Bishop then faces east, while praying: "O God the Great and Rich in His Gifts, Permit and fill him/them with every wisdom and understanding. Preserve him/them in your worship, without blame."
- ❖ After the prayers, the congregation responds: "O hear us, O Lord have mercy upon us, O Lord bless us". This response is said generally at the end of any prayer.
- ❖ The Bishop then turns to the west, holds his face, saying: "O God, Who holds everyone with your right hand...show your face on your servant(s)...to teach your holy sayings and preach your commandments to your people...grant him/them a humble heart to read and understand your law, to be of benefit for him/them and those who listen to him/them."
- ❖ The Bishop's hand represents God's hand, which holds the mind of man, making him able to understand, teach and preach the life-giving, strong word of God.
- ❖ The Bishop turns east and says: " O Lord, Master, who chose His servant Ezra, and granted him wisdom to read your law to your people...grant him/them the wisdom and spirit of prophecy to recite your holy sayings to your people without blame."
- ❖ It is very important that the Reader's life be without blame, his deeds corresponding to his words, so that he might not stumble with anyone. His words should be strong, his service pure and useful for everyone, as was Ezra the great writer.
- ❖ The Bishop (or the Archdeacon if available) then reads the following commandments:
 - Learn the books of the Holy Bible one by one.
 - Read with understanding, according to the Lord's commandment "let the reader understand"
 - Preach the congregation
 - Your life should be pure, as the lamp on the lectern, enlightening for those around you with your words and deeds.
- ❖ The Bishop then signs their service garments; they wear them; they join the chorus in the responses and praises of the Liturgy.
- ❖ At the end of the Liturgy, they partake of the Holy Communion. After the Bishop partakes of the Honoured Blood, and before drinking water, he blows on their faces, one by one, saying, "Accept the Holy Spirit"
- ❖ A procession is done for them in the altar and the church, everyone feels the holy rejoicing for their ordination.

Notes

- ❖ The hands are not laid upon him; only his hair is cut.
- ❖ It is very important that the Bishop asks the congregation "Does he deserve?", so as to have a public witness before God and the church that he is worthy. The Apostle St. Paul says, "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2).
- ❖ Cutting the hair symbolizes the cutting off of bad habits and evil thoughts.

- ❖ Cutting the hair in the arrangement of the cross, while mentioning the Holy Trinity points to the gifts and talents he gains from the Holy Trinity, through the blessings of Christ's death on the cross.
- ❖ The five hair locks are a symbol of Christ's five wounds, which are the three nails, the crown of thorns and the spear.
- ❖ A Reader can touch the altar's utensils with a veil, to dry them after the Holy Liturgy, and puts them back in their place.
- ❖ He can get married after this rank, and if his wife dies he can get remarried.

C. Subdeacon (Epi-diakon)

Epi-diakon is a Greek word consisting of two parts: "epi" i.e. under or helper, and "diakon" i.e. deacon, so the meaning is *deacon's helper*.

Qualifications

The Coptic Orthodox male members who are nominated for ordination to the rank of Subdeacon (Epi-diakon) must meet the following minimum requirements, in addition to the requirements of the rank of Reader (Anagnostes):

- ❖ 20 years or older, under normal conditions, unless he is brilliant and outstanding in the church's service, is as wise as the elders and as honest as the saints.
- ❖ He is to be recommended by the people and priests.
- ❖ Everyone witnesses that he is of good manners and deeds.

Duties

- ❖ To guard the church's doors of heretics and animals.
- ❖ To organize seating in the church: men in their specific places, women in theirs, Sisters and Nuns in theirs, etc.
- ❖ To light the church's lanterns.
- ❖ To look after the church's books, and the priests and servants clothes.
- ❖ To prepare the censors.
- ❖ To help the deacon, or replace him in emergencies.

These duties are in addition to those for the rank of Reader, and do not cancel them, so he can act as a Reader if needed.

Uniform

same as of the rank of Reader (Anagnostes)

Rites of Ordination

- ❖ He bows before the altar before wearing his tunic (tunia), and after the Prayer of Reconciliation.
- ❖ The Bishop prays the prayer of Thanksgiving, then raises incense in the four directions.
- ❖ The Bishop faces the East while praying: "O Lord of Hosts.....accept your servant (.....) as Subdeacon, he who is standing here waiting for Your Heavenly gifts."
- ❖ The Bishop says: "the Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, completing our weakness, may come upon this brother whose name was mentioned, to acquire the grade of Subdeacon."
- ❖ The Bishop, facing East, prays, "Yes O Lord, make him worthy to be a Subdeacon."
- ❖ The congregation responds: "O Lord hear us, O Lord have mercy upon us, O Lord bless us", or Kyrie eleyson (Lord have mercy) 3 times in the same tune.

- ❖ The Bishop faces west, holds the Subdeacon's face while praying: "O Lord the Master Almighty...show your face on your servant (....), to become an Subdeacon. Fill him with your Holy Spirit to become worthy to touch the service utensils"
(note that the utensils are to be carried with a veil when drying them and storing them.)
- ❖ The Bishop faces East, and prays: "O Lord, look to our service, send your grace on your servant... to be worthy to live as Subdeacon without blame."
- ❖ The Bishop then signs his forehead with his right thumb saying: "We call you in God's Holy Church, Amen." The congregation responds, "Amen."
- ❖ The Bishop then says: "(...) a Subdeacon for God's Holy Church Amen. The congregation responds, "Amen."
- ❖ The Bishop signs the forehead 3 times with his right thumb (without laying of hands), while saying: "We call you (...) a Subdeacon for (...) church. Khen Efran... Efezmaroot...." Then the second and third sign. After each signing, the congregation responds, "Amen." At these signings, the Holy Spirit descends on him the gifts to carry out his service.
- ❖ The Bishop faces the east while praying the prayer of Thanksgiving for completing this ordination, saying: "We thank you O Master, the Almighty, grant him Your awe and purity so that he may be perfect in all the works of his service..."
- ❖ After signing the tunic (tunia) and the stole (patrachil), the Bishop dresses the Subdeacon with them, while saying: "Glory and honour...peace and establishing...Amen."
- ❖ Then he recites the commandment of Subdeacon: "My son, you have gained a good grade... to be a follower and assistant to the deacon in the service, to watch the doors of the church and keep discipline in the church."
- ❖ Then the Subdeacon stands with the chorus of deacons and joins in the responses and hymns of the Liturgy.
- ❖ He partakes of the Holy Communion at the end of the Liturgy, the Bishop blows on his face, he goes around the church in a procession rejoicing.

Notes

- ❖ The hands are not laid on him, nor is his hair cut, only the signings.
- ❖ He can get married after this rank, and if his wife dies he can get remarried, contrary to the higher priesthood ranks.

D. Deacon (Diakon)

"Deacon" is a Syrian word that means servant. In Greek, it is "diakon". The deacon's main job is to help the priest or bishop in his religious service. A person ordained as a deacon is one of the priesthood ranks and is consecrated for the church services.

Qualifications

The Coptic Orthodox male member who is nominated for ordination to the rank of Deacon (Diakon) must meet the following minimum requirements in addition to the requirements of the rank of Subdeacon (Epi-diakon):

- ❖ 25 years or older
- ❖ He has to pass a period of testing and discipleship, to reach a reasonable level of maturity to carry out his service, as the Apostle says: "But let these also first be proved, then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless" (1 Tim. 3:10).
- ❖ He has to be a good example in his speech, deeds, love, purity and care for his spiritual life and eternity.
- ❖ He should be humble and not greedy, able to bear the hardships of service without murmuring, and has the principal to be fair with everyone.
- ❖ He should read and learn continuously, so that he may build his spirituality and grow in grace and in knowing Our Lord Jesus Christ.
- ❖ Everyone should witness that he is honest, pure and loves peace.
- ❖ The church's congregation should recommend him.
- ❖ These conditions are a must, especially because the deacon is a consecrated deacon to serve the church.

Duties

- ❖ To say the responses to the litanies prayed by the priest during the raising of incense and the liturgy.
- ❖ To call the congregation to start prayer.
- ❖ To ask the congregation to keep discipline and quietness in the church, to stand in awe, purity and fear.
- ❖ To help the priest in congregation visitations.
- ❖ To write down the names of those who offer the oblations and offerings to the church, so that the priest might mention them after the Litany of oblations. It was stated in the 'Didaskalia' (the Teachings of the Apostles) to "let the deacons write down the names of those who offer, either being alive or dead, to be mentioned during the readings and prayers."
- ❖ To clear the altar and prepare it before the priest comes for the liturgy.
- ❖ To read the Holy Gospel in the liturgy. In the rite of ordaining a deacon, the Bishop says, "... and has the honour of reading the Holy Gospels".

- ❖ He can carry the chalice (cup) and give the Honoured Blood to the congregation, with the priest's permission. Also in the commandment, "you should comprehend the honour given to you to carry the True Blood, which gives salvation to the world..."
- ❖ Serving the widows, orphans, needy, the sick and prisoners. The bishop says to him, "... you should visit the people of the Lord, the widows, the orphans, those who are distressed, help whoever you can and pray for them. You should be a good example to them, so that they should see your good deeds..."
- ❖ Preaching and teaching, with permission from the priest.
- ❖ To recite the responses of a deacon from inside the altar. In the old days, no one was allowed in the altar except the Bishops, Priests, Archdeacons, and Deacons.
- ❖ He participates with the bishop or the priest in all other prayers: Baptism, Mayroun, liturgy of the water, consecrating the church, ordinations, feasts, etc.

Uniform

- ❖ The Deacon and the Archdeacon wear a tunic (tunia) and the red stole (Patrachil), as a sign of being washed up in Christ's Blood. The stole is put on his left shoulder as a sign of carrying the cross, while the edges of the stole resemble the wings of angels. In this St. John Chrysostom says: [meditate on the spiritual joy, you who are resembling the wings of angels when you wear your beautiful stole on your left shoulder].
- ❖ The deacon and Archdeacon might wear a cap decorated with crosses, pictures of Our Lord Jesus and the saints. In some churches, it is still used, while mostly disappeared from lots of other churches. It is preferable to keep our old traditions.

Rites of Ordination

- ❖ It takes place after the Prayer of Reconciliation.
- ❖ After an accurate choice of the person nominated by the priests and the congregation, he stands before the altar without his tunic, bowing his head humbly.
- ❖ The Bishop and attendants pray The Prayer of Thanksgiving, then the Bishop raises incense in the four directions.
- ❖ The Bishop faces east while praying: " O Lord of Hosts...accept your servant (...) as a deacon, who is standing waiting for your Heavenly gifts.
- ❖ The Bishop announces: "The grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ completing our weakness may descend on (...).
- ❖ The Bishop faces the west, puts his right hand on his head while praying: " O Lord God the Almighty... show your face on your servant (...) who has proceeded to deaconship fill him with the Holy Spirit, power and strength."
- ❖ The Bishop faces east while praying : "Yes O Lord, make him worthy to be a deacon...". Then, " Look O Lord to us, and our service, purify us from every iniquity, send your grace from heaven on your servant (...), to be worthy to complete your service without blame...".
- ❖ The Bishop turns west, signs his forehead three times with his right thumb, saying: "(...) a deacon for the altar of....church Khen Efran....Efezmaroot....
First signing: We call you (...) a deacon for the altar of.... church Efezmaroot...
Second signing: as for the first
Third signing: as for the first

After each signing, the congregation responds "Amen."

Here, the Holy Spirit descends and grants His gifts for the service.

- ❖ The Bishop turns east while praying: " We thank you O Lord God the Master...for the laying of hands on your servant (...) and the descent of your Holy Spirit on him. Support him with your purity and grace.
- ❖ The Bishop faces west, signs the service clothes of the deacon, which are the tunic and stole. Then he dresses him with the tunic, puts the stole on his left shoulder while saying: "Glory and honour to the Holy Trinity, The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit, peace and establishment of the One Holy Apostolic Universal Church of God. Amen."
- ❖ The Bishop then recites the commandment, "My son, you have to be honest in this service, you have to do whatever is assigned for you and complete it..."
- ❖ The deacon enters the altar, bows, then stands on the right side, while the deacons sing 'Axios' (meaning "worthy").
- ❖ He participates in the responses within the altar, until the end of the Liturgy, and partakes of the Holy Communion.
- ❖ The Bishop blows on his face saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit", after partaking of the Honoured Blood.
- ❖ A procession takes place in celebration as usual.

Notes

- ❖ The hands are laid on him, as the deacon is one of the priesthood ranks and is consecrated for the church services.
- ❖ If he is ordained before getting married, he is not permitted to get married.
- ❖ If his wife died after his ordination, he is not permitted to remarry, just as the priest. If he does so, his rank is withdrawn.

General Guidelines for All Ranks of Deaconship

1. All ranks of deaconship should study the Coptic Language, because it is connected to all the rites, readings, praises and tunes of the church, so that they might read the Coptic Language, not Coptic written in Arabic or English.
2. They should learn, study and repeat the praises and hymns as a chorus and in hymns classes.
3. They should know the rites of the church and the services of the different church seasons.
4. They should be aware of the saints feasts and recite the appropriate glorification hymns.
5. They should follow the general rules and guidelines of deaconship service, not looking for authority and avoid disputes especially during the services.
6. They should be true partakers of the liturgy and other praises.

Church Attendance Guidelines

1. The deacon should be prepared to attend the liturgy by repentance and confession.
2. He should shower (symbolizing repentance and confession) and wear proper clothing worthy of visiting the Lord's house.
3. The deacon prays the Lord's Prayer upon awakening and prays the Matins prayer.
4. On the way to church: he prays Psalms 26 ("The Lord is my light..."), 46 ("Clap your hands, all you nations...") and 121 ("I was glad for those who said to me...").
5. The deacon should arrive early (15 minutes before the start of the Matins Raising of Incense) to pray the Doxology of Matins.
6. He crosses himself at the outside entrance of the church.
7. He is entering heaven as he is entering the church.
8. He walks quietly and slowly towards the sanctuary while saying, "But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy."
9. He bows before the sanctuary 3 times while saying, "I worship You O Christ, with Your good Father, and the Holy Spirit for You have come and saved us."
10. He takes the blessing from the altar curtain, relics of the saints, from the bishop and priest, and then goes to stand in his place.
11. After he receives the blessings from the bishop/priest and the Beshara (the Gospel), at the end of the Matins Raising of Incense, he enters the sanctuary to prepare to dress in his vestments.
12. Presenting the tunic on the left hand, showing the cross on the front side of the tunic, and uses his right hand to make the sign of the cross during the prayers of the dressing of the deacon vestments. the deacon should bow his head or kneel before the priest to have the priest's blessing and approval.
13. They should present their tunics to the priest to sign them, for the following reasons:
 - a. It is considered as permission for them to serve in the Holy Liturgy.
 - b. A permission to have Holy Communion.
 - c. A declaration that these deacons are not banned by the church.
 - d. It is a sign of submission to the priest, the younger to the elder, asking for his blessing because the elder blesses the younger (Heb 7:7).
14. While putting on his vestments, he should quietly recite Psalms 29 ("I will exalt You...") and 92 ("The Lord has reigned...") from the Agpeya.
15. After putting on the vestments, he should exit, bow down before the sanctuary, and take his place amongst the chorus of deacons.

16. If any deacon is late after the *Offertory of the Lamb*, he is not allowed to put on his service clothes and serve. If he is late after the reading of the Gospel, he cannot partake of the Holy Communion.
17. They should always wear the tunic and serve in every Liturgy, either inside the Sanctuary or outside, it is not right to enter the altar without wearing a tunic. Since he is wearing the tunic and is serving, he should partake of the Holy Communion, and if doesn't partake of the Holy Communion then according to the rites of the church it is a great error.
18. While distributing the psalms, the deacons must distribute the following psalms to the serving priest or bishop:
 - a. In the Third Hour: "May the Lord answer you...", "I will exalt You..." and, "Oh clap your hands all you people..."
 - b. In the Sixth Hour: "Save me O God by Your name...", "Lord You have been favorable to Your land...", and, "The Lord reigns..."
 - c. In the Ninth Hour: "Oh sing to the Lord a new song...", "The Lord said to my Lord...", and, "I believed, therefore I spoke..."
19. During the liturgy, he must keep himself from excessive movement, from entering and exiting the sanctuary needlessly, and to keep his conversation only to matters regarding the service with a quiet voice.
20. The deacon should always look towards the sanctuary during the liturgy except during the liturgy of the word (the readings) during which, each chorus should look towards the opposite chorus.
21. He bows down in the known times for bowing during the liturgy and does not sit down during prayer except for the times when sitting is allowed or by exemption from the lead deacon (certain cases only).
22. He faces the altar while bowing down and praying as Christ (the Body and Blood) is present on the altar.
23. He should enter and exit the sanctuary through the side entrances (if available) except while responding to the Litany of the Gospel and the Processions of the Feasts.
24. After every reading, the reader shall bow down before the right-hand side of the main sanctuary entrance then proceed to the priest to receive his blessing, while making sure to follow the proper discipline of entering and exiting the sanctuary (see previous).
25. He participates in all the responses and hymns for the congregation and deacons in one spirit and one voice, all responses in accordance to the voice level and following the language in which the priest is praying.
26. He should not raise his voice in prayers, except specifically the prayers of the congregation and the deacons. However, it is not wrong that his heart should rise (and not his voice) as he participates in every prayer.
27. He follows the deacon in charge in all the responses and does not raise his voice above the lead deacon.
28. All deacons, without exception, receive Holy Communion before the congregation.
29. He does not use the cymbals or the triangle except by permission from the deacon in charge and he is aware that the cymbals and triangle are meant to keep the beat in a quiet manner and away from the microphone.
30. Deacons should not go out of the church with the tunic, because these are clothes for service only inside the church.

31. He takes off the tunic at the end of the Liturgy, after releasing the angel of sacrifice, and not before.
32. Deacons should observe their behavior and maintain silence in the church at all times.

Roles & Instructions for Deacons Serving in the Sanctuary

1. Be present in the church from the beginning of the Matins Raising of Incense and assist in organizing the altar and prepare for the service of the liturgy with the priest.
2. Responsible (with the permission of the lead deacon in the Sanctuary) for arranging the Eprospareen upon the altar, carrying the wine (during the Offertory), laying the Eprospareen after the Prayer of Thanksgiving (except in the presence of another priest), rounding the altar during the Pauline, reading the Gospel (with permission of the priest), and removing the Eprospareen after the Prayer of Reconciliation (except in the presence of another priest).
3. Say the responses of the Litanies of Peace, Fathers, and Congregation during the Pauline and the Acts (Praxis) processions.
4. Stands at the north side of the altar (with the permission of the lead deacon in the Sanctuary) and assist the priest with the pages of the liturgy book and distributing the responses amongst the deacons of the sanctuary in a discreet manner.
5. Not permitted to rest his hands on the altar. Only the priest's liturgical book, the Eprospareen, the Cross and the Gospel and other altar linens are allowed on the altar. It is recommended that the deacons carry their own books in their hands.
6. Should be knowledgeable in the manner of presenting the censer in a ready state, emptying it of ashes and presenting it to the priest in the appropriate manner (with the permission of the lead deacon in the Sanctuary) for the service of the censer from the beginning of the liturgy.
7. Movement in the sanctuary proceeds counter-clockwise around the altar (from the right to the left).
8. Should be knowledgeable of the rites of the procession inside the altar and around the church.
9. Stands during times of bowing down (with humility in his heart) to observe the Body and Blood, shielding them from anything that may fall into or upon them (if necessary).
10. Hold a candle during the consecration prayer and the fraction prayer.
11. Maintains silence and conservation of movement in the main sanctuary and the side sanctuaries.
12. After the liturgy, reorganizes the altar and returns it to its original state (e.g. wrapping the vessels, disposing of the water and the contents of the censer, the lights, etc.)
13. Limits access to the sanctuary to those who serve in the altar. Only deacons dressed in service vestments are permitted to enter the altar.
14. Focuses only on the sanctuary deacons' responses and does not raise his voice during congregation responses.
15. Keeps his eyes on the Body and Blood.
16. Abstains from excessive movement, laughing, talking, or signaling. He should stand with respect, meekness, and silence. Movements in the altar should only pertain to the service of the sanctuary and always with the knowledge of the lead sanctuary deacon.

Blessed be the obedient son