



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Pennsylvania and its Affiliated Regions.

“For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing.”(1Timothy 3:13)

General instructions for deacons

- ❖ Only those who are ordained are allowed to put on the deacons’ vestment (Tonya).
- ❖ Deacons may only be ordained in the diocese.
- ❖ For all ranks, deacons should be ordained in their own church, and have a recommendation from their own church priest. And in case of promotion to the ranks of Reader (Anagnostees) or Sub-deacon (Epideacon), they should have a recommendation from their father of confession as well.
- ❖ Deacons should display proper Christian behavior and good reputation; including: regular confession and communion, proper attire and general appearance and NOT be under the sway of bad habits (such as smoking, drinking etc.)
- ❖ Deacons should enter the church with awe and reverence. They should cross themselves at the entrance of the church, walk quietly and slowly towards the sanctuary while praying: *“Butas for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy, in fear of You I will worship toward Your Holy Temple”* (Psalm 5:7), bow before the sanctuary while praying, *“I worship You O Christ with Your good Father and the Holy Spirit for You have come and saved us”*. Subsequently, they receive the blessing of the Saints (by kissing their relics or icons), then receive the blessing of the priest and stand in their places.
- ❖ Deacons should be present early at the start of any service. During the Divine Liturgy, the latest time for putting on the deacons’ vestments is the absolution of the servants.
- ❖ While putting on their vestments, deacons should be quiet while reciting Psalms 29 and 92. After putting on the vestments, they should bow down before the altar and then take their places among the chorus of deacons.
- ❖ Chanters (Psaltis) should wear only the white tunic (Tonya). Readers and Subdeacons should in addition put on the RED badrasha crossed-in the back. Only Deacons and Archdeacons are to wear the Badrasha on the shoulder.
- ❖ After every reading, the reader should bow down before the altar and then receive the blessing of the priest.

Requirements for ordination in the rank of chanter (Psaltis)

- ❖ Must be at least six years old.
- ❖ Should know how to make the sign of the cross, to recite the Lord's Prayer and to enter the church in awe and reverence according to what has been mentioned in the general instructions.
- ❖ Should at least be able to chant some deacon and/or congregation liturgical responses.
- ❖ Should be regularly attending hymns class in order to be able to advance in his rank.

Requirements for elevation to the rank of Reader (Anagnostees)

- ❖ Must be at least twelve years old.
- ❖ Should demonstrate observance of the general instructions mentioned above.
- ❖ Should show satisfactory advancement in the rank of Psaltis at least in terms of knowing the hymns, responses and rites of the Raising of Incense (Vespers and Matins) and of the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil.
- ❖ Should show proficiency in reading the Scriptures clearly and in a **comprehensible** way.
- ❖ *Should be tested* in his ability to understand the scripture in accordance to his age by a suitable assignment in the Holy Bible.
- ❖ Should know the various church liturgical books, such as the Kholagy, Katameros, Psalmody and Agpeya, and be able to open the Katameros on the readings of the day.

Requirements for elevation to the rank of Subdeacon (Epideacon)

- ❖ Must be at least twenty five years old.
- ❖ Should demonstrate observance of the general instructions mentioned above.
- ❖ Should show satisfactory advancement in the duties of the previous two ranks of Chanters and Readers.
- ❖ Should know the rites and how to serve in special occasions such as in Baptism, Holy Matrimony, Funerals, etc.
- ❖ Should demonstrate knowledge of spiritual, dogmatic and theological matters. The following suggested books are to be studied: *Comparative Theology* by His Holiness of The Thrice-blessed memory Pope Shenouda the Third and *The Spirituality of the Rites of the Holy Liturgy* by His Grace Bishop Mettaous, and His Grace's books on the sacraments.
- ❖ Should be able to help the Deacon in some of his duties and should be responsible to guard the order of the church during the liturgical services from any disturbance.

Bishop Karas



*Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of
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