

Discussion Board 1

11.15 – 11.45 am Saturday 3rd September 2022

Good assignment for deacons – Ministering to people on margins of church / society – connecting them and bringing new life.

Prison chaplaincy. Hospital chaplaincy. Schools. Seafarers (Stella Maris). Homeless – food banks. Bishop secretary.

Good assignments for deacons. Any assignments by bishops additional to assumed parish ministry would help greatly in clarifying the role of the deacon beyond 'Father's helper' or doing the same as any lay person.

Fight against 'untruths'. Problems with Chaplains in Hospices – what are they allowed to do – conflicts

Ours is a distinct ministry not a second route to priesthood. How many understand this?

Assignments – Younger priests do not seem to understand diaconate even though they have been ordained as deacons. How can we gain an influence in seminaries to increase the understanding of seminarians approaching ordination?

Ongoing formation for clergy – need for exploration of a church for the future – strong leadership from Bishop.

Priests not getting informed about nature of the diaconate.

Laity is confused by the deacon. No idea of his role.

No common understanding of the deacons role. Particularly across diocese.

The people see deacons as one of them. We are part of the community.

Deacon Assignments – finding the 'experts' in laity to contribute to parish / community life.

Deacon Assignment – Creating and growing service based charities.

Lack of awareness or understanding of the diaconate.

Different cultural views on importance of diaconate.

Proclaim the Truth. Authenticity and authority.

Diaconate is its own ministry, can't therefore be a stage to the priesthood.

Priests from other countries and cultures may be more familiar with the 'pyramid' model of the church – action to form these in Vat II model and in role of deacon.

Don't distinguish 'Permanent' Deacons – they are Deacons.

Deacon Assignments – visiting the homes of both RC and non-RC.

If Deacon is not appointed to his own parish what happens to his family?

Is the deacon really the eyes and ears of the bishop? How should he 'report' to his bishop?

Assignment of deacons – being ordained for a Town or Deanery – Accountant deacon working for diocese – Builder deacon working for diocese – There needs to be an audit of deacon's skills and interests – Job / assignment adverts.

Good assignment for deacons – Keeping people alive thro' coming winter with food / fuel poverty situation.

Deacons as ministers of Baptism – parents and godparents are very engaged by the ministry of a deacon. People have found this a positive change in the church.

Deacon husband and (or) wife when outside meet people and they want to talk “I am I've seen you can we just have a chat about.”

Diaconate is individual.

When not welcomed by the priest: Bishop and Dean need love. Need to understand the priest as a person. Need to offer service to other parishes locally.

Ecumenically the Deacon must lead and then stand back.

Sign of the Times: Deacons need be like C of E clergy as treating all geography as an area to be travelled.

The importance of the ministry outside the parish for the diaconate.

Discussion Board 2

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Lay ministry. Importance of local environment (school, hospital etc) – creates the need – provides people to be catechists etc – problems of insecurity in faith, job, relationships.

Key role for deacon: to energise the laity.

Lay ministries – need encouragement – deacons can encourage – inspired by other lay ministers – potential ministers need to get over sense of needing to be perfect – need prepare for ministry – an investment for the long term.

What is the difference between lay MINISTRY and lay APOSTOLATE?

Why are men less attracted to the church than women?

Catalyst for Apostolate / priesthood of laity – are we inspiration thro' our lives

Let our live / work experiences form assignments e.g. chaplaincy, food banks

Threats of history – danger of staying with old hierarchical model rather than one promised at Vatican II

Threat – Pre VC2 inclined Bishops not having PD's.

Rising challenge of social media – Where does faith fit in? – Not just traditionalists.

Good to promote the Diaconate, once they have been ordained let the people know.

A new way of being church is emerging. The diaconate is an integral part of it.

Shortage of priests as threat to diaconate – expect deacons to become priests (especially if married priests allowed).

Does history point to ongoing threats... It has rightly been said that triangular thinking about hierarchy, orders and power is irreconcilable with Vatican II ecclesiology. How can we address the ongoing dominance in the Church (priests and parishes) of pre-Vatican II understandings of the Church?

For John Morrill. Where does Acts 6 + Stephen tell us / not about the diaconate?

Sign of the times: Recruit younger Deacons before retirement age.

A 'video' or video clips about Deacons!

Don't let Diaconate go the way of Presbyterate i.e. becoming clericalised, institutionalised, inward-looking and doing the urgent not the important!

Threat: Authority of Priest not using ministry of PD.

Sign of the Times: Bring the things of the world of work into the Church.

Deacon: to generate broader approach to faith: - prayer – scripture – social action – as well as Mass – make connection! (*arrow pointing back to the word faith here*)

Learn from mistakes from history

How do we work with people opposed to you – people with closed mind set

Not recognise us as individuals – not be all alike

Does history point to ongoing threatsIf diaconate foundered because monasticism took on care of those in need, and deacons become liturgical mainly, is not the focus of current deacons in sacristy and sacraments re-creating the same conditions to abandon / move on from the diaconate?

Stop asking for permission. Start doing something.

We are / can be Signposts

Threat: Burden of reduced clergy numbers.....overwhelming both Priests and Deacons

Was the pre-Vatican II church really less missionary than now? (clue: I don't think so)

Deacons can be a catalyst for change. But also can be a sign of stability when change seems too much or too fast for some.

Moved to prepare the gifts more thoughtfully and carefully from the heart.

Deacon as catalyst by encouraging a group of lay people to write the prayers of intercession. Taking into consideration local experience.

Clericalism is a serious and present menace in the Church .How is clericalism within the diaconate recognised, addressed and prevented.

Discussion Board 3

11.15 – 11.45 am Saturday 3rd September 2022

Women Deacons. Need clarity on follow on ministries of Bishop and Priest.

To answer John's second question:- There should be female deacons.

Women Deacons. Opening a new set of opportunities to engage wider inside and outside of church.

If the commission recommends ordination for women as deacon where does this leave the concept of the Bishop's fullness of order – if only men can be Bishops and Priests?

Renewed hope and interest in the church with the ordination of women to the diaconate.

Women Deacons. Would need to change models of ministry. Attention to potential pressures of tension family life and church service.

Women's ordination to the Diaconate. Many people might be unsettled. This is not necessarily a bad thing!

Why are there no women speakers here?

Women would enrich the diaconate. Act as catalyst for progress.

Women as Deacons – Time right? Who knows. Meanwhile need for local church to focus on local needs and on prayer! Recognition a first step