

Guidelines for Deacons in Transition

THESE GUIDELINES ARE INTENDED FOR DEACONS WHO ARE
MOVING FROM ONE CHURCH TO ANOTHER

2/2015

The Deacon Council recognizes that transition from one church to another can be a very difficult time for deacons. The leave taking usually is not the choice of the Deacon. He/she leaves because the rector/priest/priest in charge/vicar retires or moves to a new parish. Saying goodbye to friends of many years, to well-known and well-loved traditions, ministries and liturgies can be painful. Assistance in personal counseling is available, at no charge. Ordained clergy may call the Diocese House 513-421-0311, and/or research this resource on the Diocesan website.

In hopes of decreasing the difficulty of transitioning, the Deacons Council has developed this document, in collaboration with the Bishop. We intend to clarify a few procedures so a deacon does not need to be burdened with the stress of not knowing what is expected.

This clarification is intended to be a general guide to reduce confusion and provide helpful information.

Required in every case:

1. When a rector/priest in charge/vicar leaves a congregation, the Deacon(s) must leave also. This is intended to develop a completely fresh environment for the new rector. The Deacon may stay through the interim priest's tenure, if there has been consultation with the Diocese, the vestry or mission council, and the interim.
2. If the Deacon remains with the interim it is necessary that the Deacon leave two weeks prior to the new priest's arrival.
3. The Deacon develops an exit plan, communicates her intentions (particularly the final date she/he will serve liturgically in her current church) to the Canon for Transition, the Deacon's current vestry, and the Bishop.
4. If a Deacon does remain through the tenure of the interim priest, he/she must leave at least two weeks prior to the new priest's arrival, and not return for one year. After a year the Deacon may return if the deacon has consulted with the new rector/priest/priest in charge/vicar, Canon for Transition and the Bishop.

The exit plan should be announced to the congregation at least six weeks prior to leaving. The leave taking may involve 'a good bye ritual', planned by the deacon, rector/ priest in charge/vicar.

It is recommended that deacons, if they wish, take a sabbatical of two months or more for refreshment and a new beginning.

Finally the Deacon will refer to the document *Diaconal Ministry Opportunities Process* (available on the Diocesan website) and follow the directions that apply to her/him.

Consultation with the Canon for Transition and/or the Bishop is recommended.

Overall, Deacons are expected to create their own ministry plans, and to select a new church in agreement with the rector/ priest in charge/ vicar.

The deacon will likely visit various churches, to select a few that seem to be a good 'fit'.

Then the Deacon's *Letter of Agreement* (available on the Diocesan website) is completed with the new rector and sent to the Bishop and the Canon for Transition.

The Bishop can alter this transition process as needed on a case-by-case basis.