



Deacon: “What are  
you?” and Other  
Questions About the  
Diaconate

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# What or Who?

[JP II's address to deacons in 1993](#): Deacons are ordained to *exercise a ministry of their own*, which is not that of a priest, because they "receive the imposition of hands 'not unto the priesthood but unto the ministry'" (*Lumen Gentium*, 29)-[see sec. 4](#).

The right question get to the heart of the matter?

**\*What or Who?**

**\*Not what you're "Not" but what you "Are"**





# Deacon Qualifications

## Who is the deacon?

1. A baptized Male ([Canon 1024](#))
2. Someone who wants to be a deacon; it can't be forced ([Can. 1026](#))
3. A person who must be 23 years old if going on to the priesthood, but must be 25 if unmarried or 35 if married and going to stay at the degree of deacon (Can. 1031 §1)
  - **Note in IIS you must be 30 to enter permanent diaconal formation and 35 years old at ordination**
4. Must have received Confirmation-thus all Sacraments of Initiation (Can. 1033)
5. Someone who has received the ministries of candidate, lector, and acolyte ([Can. 1035 §1](#))
6. No impediments (Can. 1041)
7. Married or celibate (Can. 1042 §1 )
  - Latin Rite Catholics choose clergy from celibates-CCC#1579-1580 unless they are headed to be a permanent deacon

# Overview –Who is the deacon

1. Someone who is an icon of Christ
2. Someone who has Holy Orders and is configured to Christ
3. Someone whose Order is set apart and rooted in Scripture
4. Someone who plays a crucial part in Church History
5. Someone who is a bridge between the Clergy and Laity
6. Someone who serves as an official ordinary minister of the Church
7. Concluding Thoughts and Questions



# 1. Deacon Icon of Christ: Jesus and Holy Orders as Icons of Goodness

Jesus-Icon of the Father

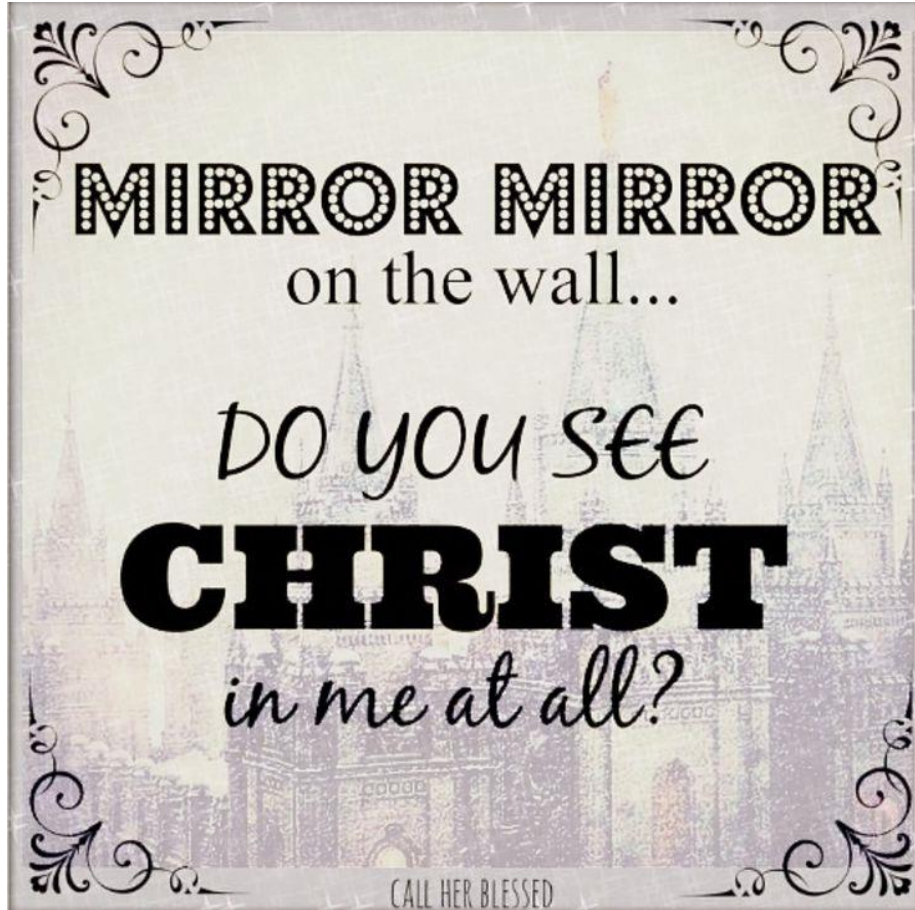
- “He who sees me sees the Father” (Jn. 12:45; 14:7-9)



Holy Orders: Icons of Christ

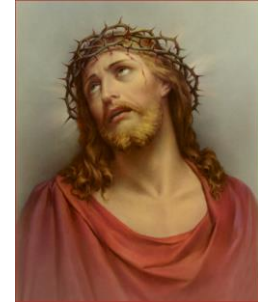


## 2. Deacon as Someone who has Holy Orders and configured to Christ: Holy Orders as Icons of Jesus Christ



- Bishops and priests are icons of and configured to *Christi capitis* (Christ the Head)

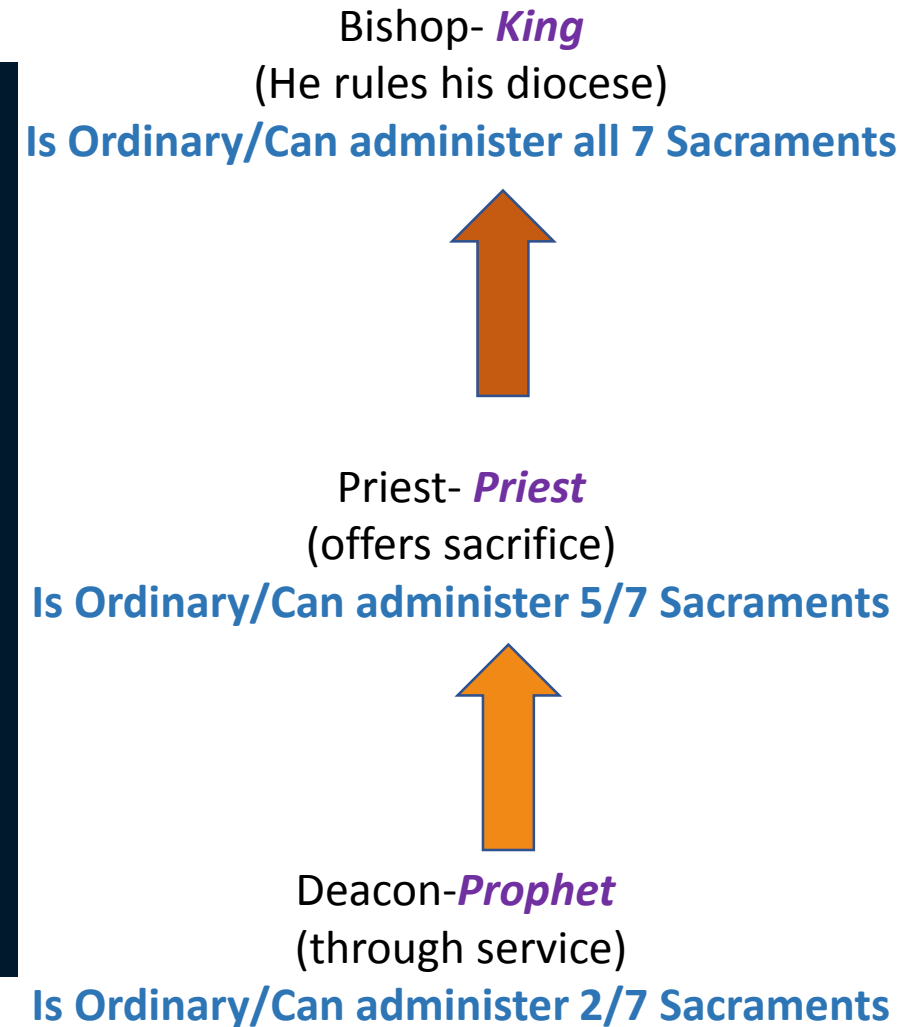
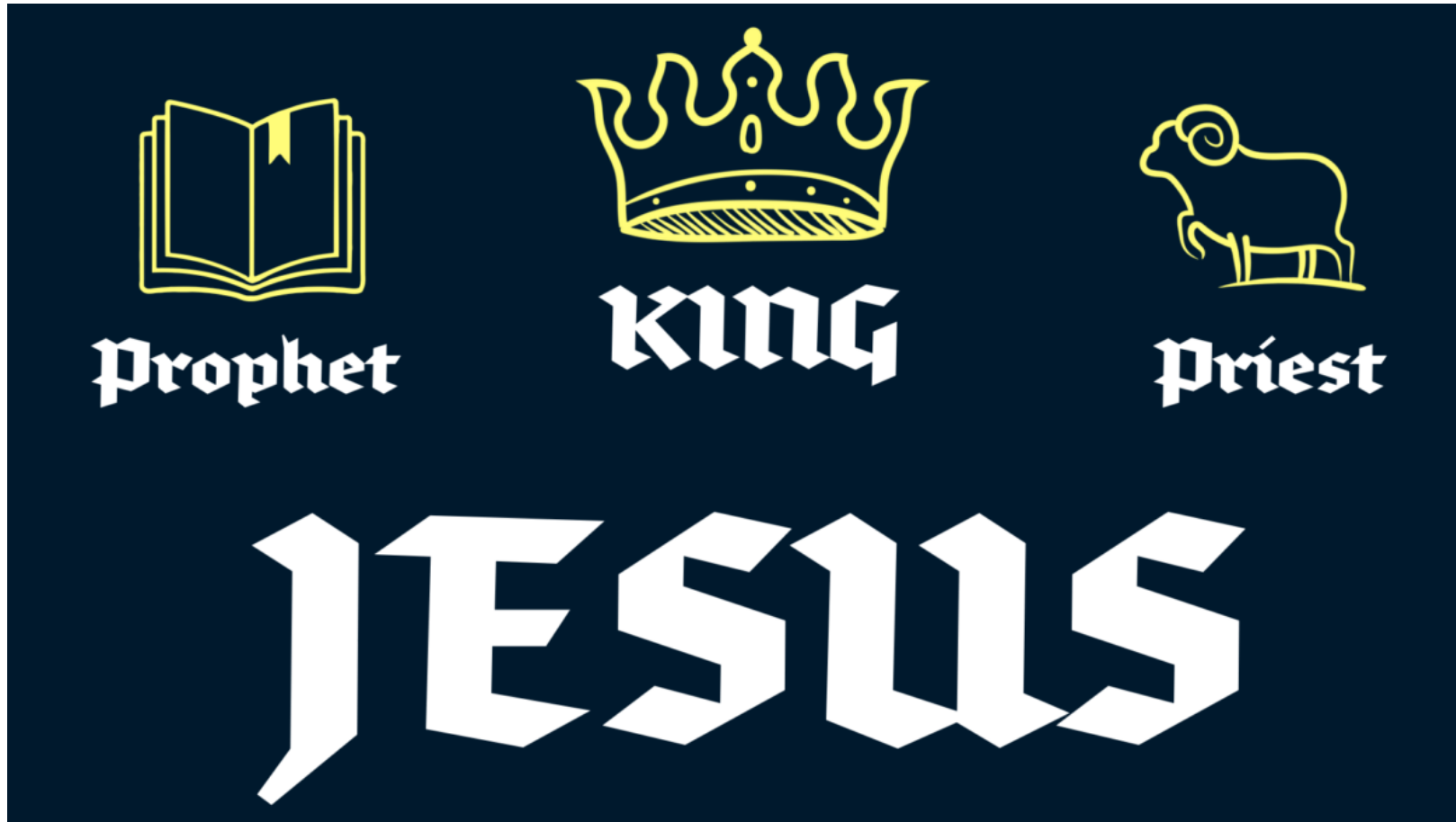
-See CCC#1548



- The Deacon is an icon of and configured to *Christus servus* (the Servant)



# Holy Orders: Icons of Christ and fulfillment of Missions of Christ



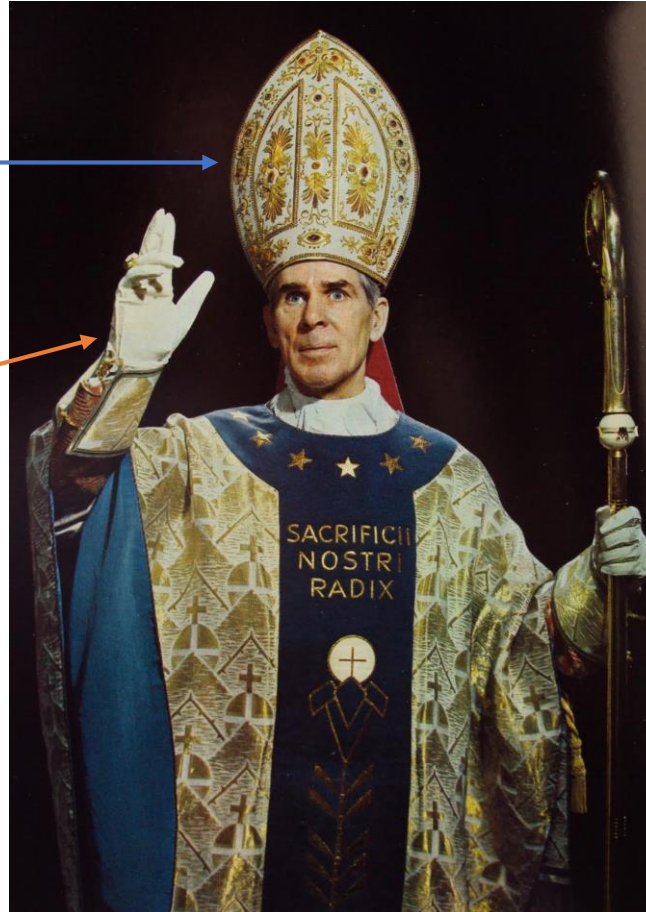
# Deacon in Icon of Holy Orders

**Bishop** (head of diocese)

has two arms

Sanctifying Arms

(**Priest**)



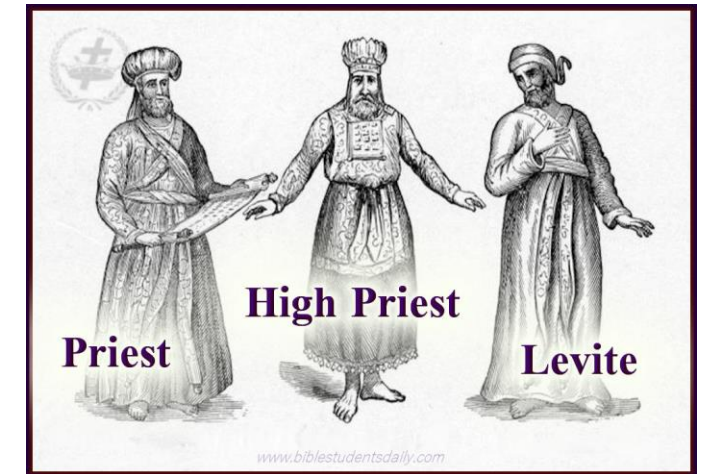
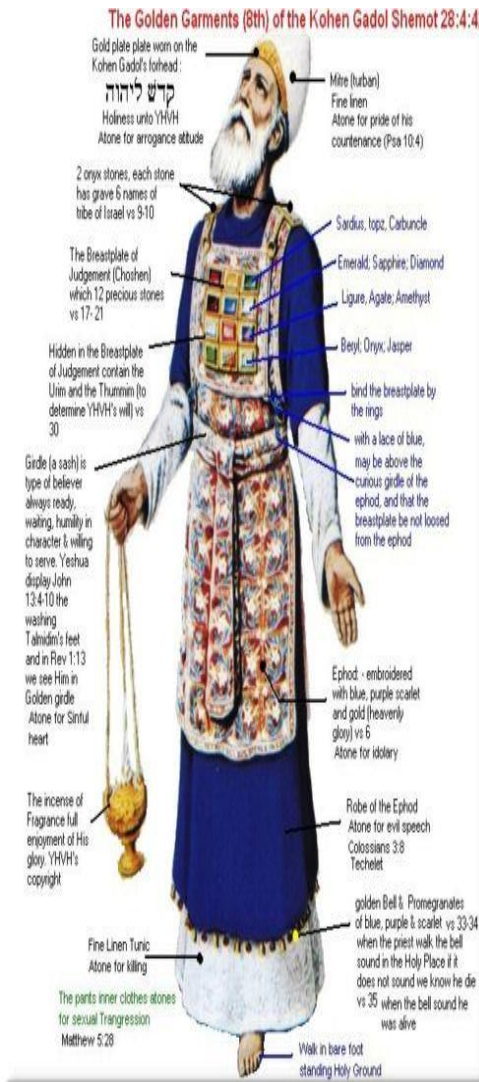
**Deacon:** Arm of  
Charity/service  
(to walk with the people)



# 3. Someone whose Order is set apart and rooted in Scripture

## Bible Verses

- Gen. 2:2-4: God blessed the 7<sup>th</sup> day and hallowed it
  - Blessed it (blueprint for priesthood) and “hallowed it” (made it holy, what makes us holy? It is love and service; gift of persons in love which is diakonia (blueprint for diaconate))
- Levitical Covenant (Num. 8:19)
  - Moses (Father-figure or Bishop), Aaron and Sons (Priests), Levites
    - “And I have given the Levites *as a gift to Aaron and his sons from among the people of Israel, to do the service for the people of Israel* at the tent of meeting, and to make atonement for the people of Israel, that there may be no plague among the people of Israel in case the people of Israel should come near the sanctuary (emphasis mine).



### 3. Someone whose Order is set apart and rooted in Scripture

- Institution of Diaconate (Acts 6: 1-6)

Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists murmured against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the body of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And what they said pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands upon them.



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### 3. Someone whose Order is set apart and rooted in Scripture

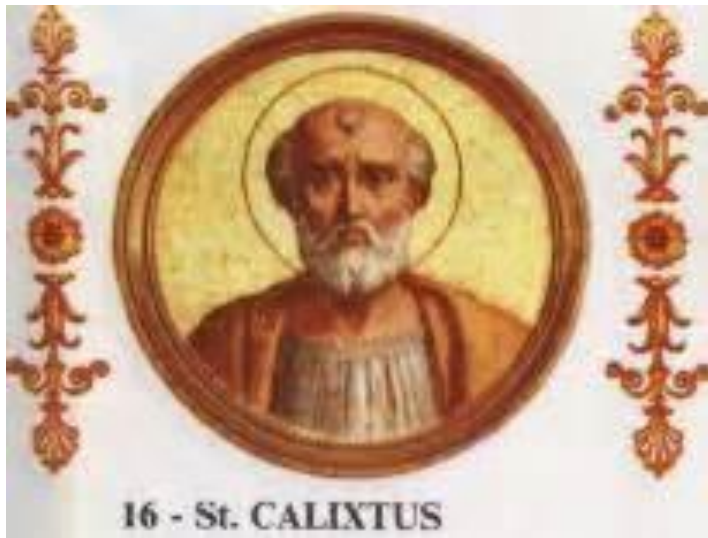
#### Qualifications of Deacons

- Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for gain; they must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then if they prove themselves blameless let them serve as deacons. Let deacons be the husband of one wife, and let them manage their children and their households well; **for those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus** (1Tim. 3:8-10, 12-13).



## 4. Deacon: Someone who played an important part in Church History

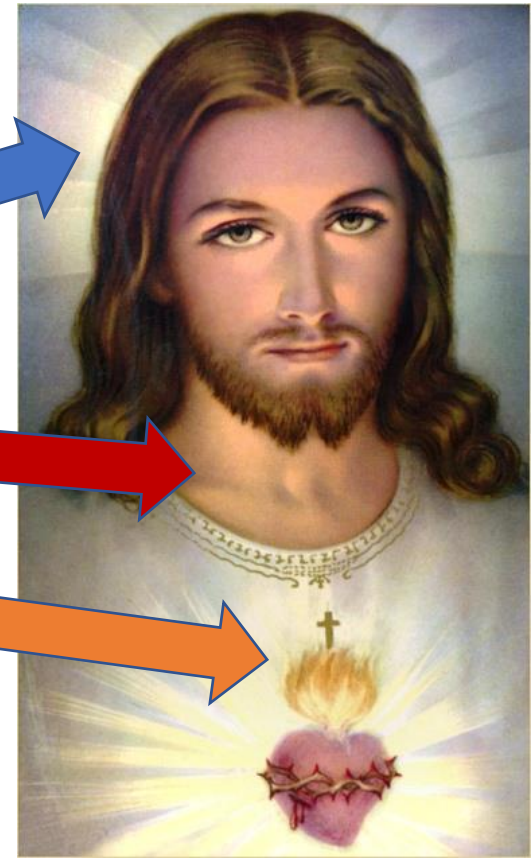
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- Apostolic Age
- Episcopal vs Rural Deacons
- Golden Age of Deacons (217-867 AD)
  - Deacon Callistus was first permanent deacon to rise to the Papacy (Pope Callistus I) [in 217 AD](#)
- More rural deacons after correction of abuses at Nicea (see [Canon 18](#)) and the growth of the Church
- Monasticism takes place of diaconal ministries in Middle ages (900-1400s)
- From 1100s-Vatican II (1962) diaconate was transitional

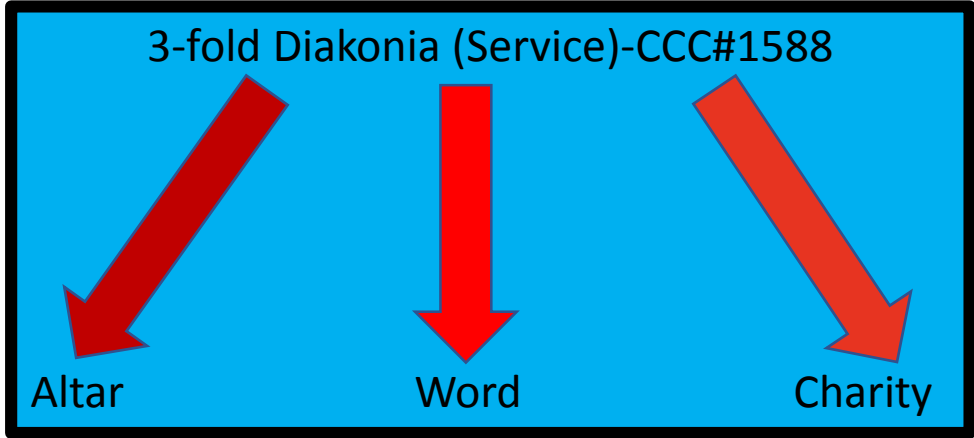
## 5. Someone who is a bridge between the Clergy and Laity

- Deacon has one foot in the world, but also one foot in the hierarchical life of the Church
- Bishop and Priest (configured to Christus Capitis)
- Deacon (neck or bridge to laity)
- Laity (baptized members of the body of Christ)





Deacons can: Hatch 'em (baptism), Match 'em (marriage), and send 'em ...to the Mercy of God (funeral rites)



## 6. Someone who serves as an official ordinary minister of the Church

- Deacon is the Ordinary Minister for:
  - Baptism
  - Distributing Communion
  - Proclamation of the Gospel
  - Funeral Rites (different than Last Rites)
  - Witnessing Marriages
  - For Last Rites can do the following:
    - Prayers for the Dying
    - Give Viaticum to the dying
    - **CANNOT DO:** Anointing of Sick, Confession, or give Apostolic Pardon
  - Leading Public prayers and Rites of the Church unless specifically reserved for a priest or bishop such as Liturgy of the Hours
  - Can bless religious articles and give blessings on behalf of the Church

# Concluding Thoughts

- Who is the deacon?
  - Someone called to Holiness and to help those in the Church follow that same call
  - An individual with was in the Mind of God and the Church through Scripture and Tradition
  - Icon of Hope
  - Bridge between Hierarchy and Laity
  - Someone configured to Christ to help the Church and those in it to walk humbly with their God (Micah 6:8)

The background of this section is a textured, light brown surface, possibly paper or fabric, with several dark grey footprints of varying sizes and orientations scattered across it. One large footprint is particularly prominent in the lower center.

**Walk Humbly  
with your God**

For More  
information  
on the  
diaconate

Look at [my book](#)  
and [other resources](#)

