



FACULTIES FOR DEACONS

1. To proclaim the gospel of the Lord and to read the Scriptures to the faithful and to teach and preach to the people (Canon 757).
2. To attend to the following:
 - a. To assist the bishop and the priest during liturgical actions in all things which the ritual attributes to Him;
 - b. To administer baptism solemnly and to supply the ceremonies that have been omitted at baptism in the case of an infant or adult;
 - c. To have custody of the Eucharist, to distribute it to himself and to others and to impart benediction of the Blessed Sacrament to the people;
 - d. To administer sacramentals and to preside at funeral and burial rites;
 - e. To preside over the offices of religious worship and prayer services when there is no priest present;
 - f. To direct Bible services when there is no priest present.

An official explanation of the documents since Vatican II has noted that "a priest or deacon in no way implies that a deacon may exercise the office of presiding when priests are present, even though the texts in question do not carry the phrase 'in the absence of a priest.'" The mind of the legislator is that a deacon is ordained to assist the priest or to substitute when there is no priest. The deacon is an ordinary minister of the Word of God, just as he is for the celebration of baptism and for the giving of communion. As such, he may lawfully give the homily after the proclamation of the Gospel, as indicated in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (n. 61), which adds **sometimes**. Accordingly, the deacon may fulfill his proper office in the preaching of the Word of God without completely supplanting priests in the work of instructing the faithful (Notitiae 12 (1976), pp. 46-47).

3. To conduct the rite of the administration of Viaticum and to assist dying persons and those with them by reciting the prayer of commendation and the prayers after death if no priest is available.



CANONICAL FACULTIES

Faculties of Deacons

Diocese of Great Falls-Billings

“The ordinary ministers of viaticum are the parish priest (pastor) and his assistants, the priest (chaplain) who is responsible for the sick in hospitals and the Superior of a clerical religious institute. In case of necessity, any other priest with at least the presumed permission of the competent minister may give viaticum.

If no priest is available, viaticum may be brought to the sick by a deacon or by another member of the faithful, either a man or a woman, who has been duly appointed by the bishop to give the Eucharist to the faithful. In this case, a deacon follows the rite prescribed in the ritual; other ministers use the rite they ordinarily follow for distributing communion, but with the special words given in the ritual for the rite of viaticum” (Pastoral Care of the Sick, n. 29b).

4. **Within the limits of the parish to which he is assigned, to assist at marriages when Mass is not celebrated and the priest is not needed to preside.**