

The Form for The
Setting Apart of Deaconess

from the

The Book of Occasional Services

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The Form for The Setting Apart of Deaconess

¶ All things being in readiness, a Priest shall present to the Bishop, sitting in his chair near the Holy Table, she who is to be set apart as Deaconess, saying,

REVEREND Father in God, I present unto you this woman, to be set apart to the office and work of Deaconess.

¶ Then shall the Bishop say,

DECLARE, we pray you, unto those who are here gathered what the office and work of a Deaconess is.

¶ Then shall the Priest, addressing the People, say,

DEARLY beloved, that it is agreeable to the mind of Christ that women should do him service by offices of loving-kindness, we gather from Saint Paul, who saith to the Philippians, Help those women which laboured with me in the Gospel, and who also commendeth unto the Romans one Phoebe, a Deaconess of the Church which was at Cenchrea.

Touching the duty of women set apart to this office and ministry, the Canons of the church affirm that it is to assist the ministry in the care of the poor and sick, in the religious training of the young and others, and in the work of moral reformation. That she may be duly appointed to such service, has this woman come hither.

¶ Then shall the Bishop say,

BELOVED, we have good confidence that she who is now presented to be set apart to the office of Deaconess is competent thereto, for it has been so certified unto us, as the Canons require, by those whose word we trust. Nevertheless, if there be any who can allege aught on account of which it is

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inexpedient that this person be so set apart, let protest be now made openly and before all men.

¶ If no good reason be alleged by any why she should not be set apart, the following lesson shall be read.

Hear the words of the Saint Paul the Apostle in his letter to the Romans.

The Lesson. Romans 12

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that

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do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

¶ *Then shall be said or sung the Magnificat or Jubilate Deo (Psalm 100).*

Magnificat. St. Luke 1:46-55

MY soul doth magnify the Lord * and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

For he hath regarded * the lowliness of his handmaiden.

For behold, from henceforth * all generations shall call me blessed.

For he that is mighty hath magnified me; * and holy is his name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him * throughout all generations.

He hath showed strength with his arm; * he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat, * and hath exalted the humble and meek.

He hath filled the hungry with good things; * and the rich he hath sent empty away.

He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel; * as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.

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Jubilate Deo. Psalm 100

O BE joyful in the Lord, all ye lands: * serve the Lord with gladness, and come before his presence with a song.

Be ye sure that the Lord he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; * we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise; * be thankful unto him, and speak good of his Name.

For the Lord is gracious, his mercy is everlasting; * and his truth endureth from generation to generation.

¶ After the appointed Psalm the Gloria Patri shall be said or sung.

GLORY be to the Father, and to the Son, * and to the Holy Ghost:

as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, * world without end. Amen.

¶ Then, all kneeling, the Bishop shall say,

Unto thee lift we up our eyes;

Answer. O thou that dwellest in the heavens.

Bishop. As the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters;

Answer. And as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress;

Bishop. Even so our eyes wait upon thee, O Lord;

Answer. Until thou have mercy upon us.

Bishop. O Lord, have mercy upon us.

Answer. Have mercy upon us.

Bishop. O Lord, let thy mercy lighten upon us;

Answer. As our trust is in thee.

¶ The Bishop shall then say,

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O ETERNAL God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hast in all times accepted and blessed the services of holy women: Look mercifully, we beseech thee, upon this thy servant, about to be set apart to the office and work of Deaconess. Protect her in the way wherein she goes, and grant that in singleness of purpose and with a willing mind she may worthily accomplish the task committed to her, to thy glory and to the praise of thy Christ, to whom with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, be glory and worship for ever and ever. Amen.

¶ Then shall the Bishop ask of her the following questions, to which the Candidate shall give answer.

DEARLY beloved in the Lord, who are minded to take upon you this service in the Church of God, have you duly considered how weighty an undertaking this is, and are you prepared with a willing mind to take upon you this office?

Answer. I have so considered it, and will do so, by the help of God.

Bishop. Will you endeavour faithfully to fulfill the duties of the same?

Answer. I will.

Bishop. Will you diligently ask of God the grace to enable you to persevere in this endeavour?

Answer. I will.

Bishop. Will you be diligent in prayer and in reading of the Holy Scripture, and in such studies as help to the knowledge and teaching of the same?

Answer. I will so do, by the help of the Lord.

Bishop. Will you be obedient to those who are over you in the Lord, cheerfully and faithfully performing the service that shall be appointed to you as Deaconess in singleness of heart?

Answer. I will endeavour so to do, the Lord being my helper.

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¶ Then shall the Candidate kneel, and the Bishop shall say,

ALmighty God, who hath called you to serve him in this holy life, give you power to fulfill this your service acceptably; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

¶ Then shall the Bishop lay his hand upon the head of the person to be made Deaconess, saying,

GOD the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, bless, preserve, and sanctify you; and so endow you with all faith, wisdom, and humility, that you may serve before him to the glory of his great Name, and to the benefit of his Church and people; and make you faithful unto death, and give you the crown of everlasting life. Amen.

NI admit thee to the office of Deaconess, In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

¶ Here the attending Deaconess, or the presenting Priest, shall present the new Deaconess with the marks of the Order. The Collar and Cross having already been blessed by the Bishop, the following words shall be said by the Bishop immediately after the presentation,

RECEIVE and wear this Collar and Cross, as a sign of your Office and a symbol of Christ whom you serve, and be a faithful servant and Deaconess in the Household of God.

Bishop. The Lord be with you.

Answer. And with thy spirit.

Bishop. Let us pray.

OUR Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us.

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And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

¶ *The People still kneeling, the Bishop shall say the prayer following.*

ENDUE, O Lord, we beseech thee, this thy servant, with the meekness and gentleness of Christ. Preserve her alike from faithless fears and unreasonable desires, that with a steadfast heart and settled purpose she may run the way of thy commandments; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

¶ *Then shall be said.*

Bishop. O magnify the Lord with me;

Answer. And let us exalt his Name together.

Bishop. O give thanks unto the God of Heaven;

Answer. For his mercy endureth for ever.

Bishop. O give thanks unto the Lord of lords;

Answer. For his mercy endureth for ever.

Bishop. The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Answer. Amen.

¶ *It is desirable that the Service of Holy Communion should follow, the newly set apart Deaconess communicating.*

AT THE COMMUNION

The Collect.

O GOD, who hast prepared for those who love thee such good things as pass man's understanding: Pour into our hearts such love toward thee, that we, loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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The Epistle. Romans 15:1-6

WE then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Gospel. St. Luke 12:35-39

LET your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.