



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT, ONE GOD AMEN

COPTIC ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE
ST. MARY AND ST. JOSEPH
COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

Deacons Meeting – Sunday, August 30, 2009

Some guidelines for deacons:

Vestments

- + Tunias to be kept clean with every deacon, and not to be left behind on the hangers in the church; they should be folded neatly and kept with every deacon.
- + Deacons are to wear a suitable size Tunia. Tunia should not be too tall or too short.
- + Deacons ordained as Psaltos do not wear budrasheen & Deacons ordained as Anaghnostos are to wear the budrasheen with X shape on the back.
- + Deacons should not go out of the church with their tunia on, or go to the washroom during the liturgy service; however, deacons can make sure to go to washroom before the liturgy service starts.
- + Deacons should not take off the tunia before the end of the Liturgy (not before releasing the angel of sacrifice).
- + Deacons should not wear shorts during the service and always dress appropriately.
- + Blessing the tunias will be allowed 3 times as following: 1-After Matins Raising of Incense (Before Agpya Prayers) 2-Before Abouna washes his hands 3-Before the Absolution of the Servants.
- + Deacons take off shoes and put them neatly under the benches, so people walking don't fall.

General Rules for Service

- + Deacons are role models to the congregation, and should not sit, move, talk, laugh, or make faces during the Divine Liturgy.
- + Deacons who come to the church should participate in the service, and not stand at the back or play in the basement, during vespers raising of incense and the Divine Liturgy.
- + There are three leaders in each Divine Liturgy: Chorus Leader (Leads the Congregation Responses), Altar Group Head Deacon (Distribute the Altar Responses) and Deacons Usher (Distribute the Agpya Readings, maintain the order of the south chorus deacons, and alternate the responses with the Chorus Leader)

Service inside the Sanctuary

- + A deacon (younger than 18 years old) who is serving in the altar is not expected to leave the altar unless the head deacon gives him permission.
- + No one should give his back to the altar or rest his hand or lean his body on the altar. He must be standing in reverence.
- + During the liturgy, he must keep himself from excessive movement, from entering and exiting the sanctuary needlessly and to keep his conversation only to matters regarding the service with as quiet a voice as possible.
- + Entering and exiting the sanctuary should be through the side entrances except while responding to the Litany for the Gospel and the Processions of the Feasts.

- + During the processions, the deacon who carries the icon facing abouna should face the altar when he is entering and then he changes his position to face abouna afterwards.
- + When deacons bow down, they should face the altar while bowing down and praying to Christ (the Body and Blood) present on the altar.
- + Deacons who have the privilege to serve in the altar should attend Vespers raising of incense, Midnight Praises and Matins raising of incense.
- + Deacons who serve in the altar do not take the microphone and say the response unless they are assigned by the head deacon. So be attentive to the head deacon for signals to say the next response, or to deal with the censer, etc.
- + Deacons who are assigned to say any response must use the microphone for any response, and be ready with it before saying any response.
- + Deacons are to keep the microphone a little bit away from mouth, approx. one hand distance to be measured.
- + All microphones are wireless and they should be kept ON (with Green Light) at all times, no one is to change it to STANDBY (with Orange Light) or OFF by all means.

Service outside the Sanctuary

- + Deacons choruses face each other while singing until the Holy Creed (after the sermon), then they look at the east facing the sanctuary afterwards.
- + When deacons bow down, they should face the altar while bowing down and praying for Christ (the Body and Blood) present on the altar.
- + Deacon should follow the chorus leader in all responses, and participate in all the hymns for the congregation in one spirit and one voice.
- + Deacons who hold the candles during the Gospel readings and Communion should stand up appropriately and in reverence; they are preferred to be grade 6 or older.
- + Deacons are to keep books in order; Usher Deacon is responsible to organize them at the end of the Divine Liturgy.

Service Schedule

- + All deacons are kindly requested to check the service schedule which will be posted on the website (Deacons Corner/Services/Liturgical Services). Also, it will be sent by e-mail, and will be posted on the door of the electrical/sound system closet at the north side of the sanctuary.
- + If any deacon has any reason that prevents him from attending his scheduled service, he should inform us to make alternative arrangement.
- + Consistent absences will result in the temporary removal of names from the altar schedule, the following measures will be taken for the deacons who will be absent from their assigned services without giving notice:
 - **First time:** Reminder from the head deacon and first warning.
 - **Second time:** Deacon's name will be temporarily removed from the next turn of altar service, and deacon will receive a warning letter/e-mail.
 - **Third time:** Deacon's name will be removed from the altar service schedule until the end of the year or speak to Abouna to review his excuse.
- + The altar group scheduled to serve in the altar on Sunday's Liturgy, is responsible to participate in the vespers praises, vespers raising of incense, midnight prayer and midnight praises on Saturday.

Coptic & Hymns Classes

- + All ranks of Deaconship should study the Coptic Language; also, they should learn the hymns and praises all the time.
- + The curriculum for Coptic & Hymns Classes for Children of Grades 3 to 12 boys has been finalized and it will be posted on the website.