

Clergy Mentor Component *

Guidelines

Special Program for the Diaconate

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology

(updated 7/16/09)

The Clergy Mentor component occupies a central role in the Special Program for the Diaconate and serves as the major “hands-on” unit of the diaconate program. The following guidelines form the basic requirements for this mentoring aspect of the Special Program for the Diaconate. Both the clergy mentor and the student should have a good understanding of these requirements and should discuss them at length with one another in order that the parameters of this component of the SPD are fully understood. Any good mentoring program depends on “buy-in” from both parties—from both the mentor and the student. It is understood that the clergy mentor is a clergyman under the omophorion of the local Metropolitan. The clergy mentor is assigned by the local Metropolitan and is under his direction.

The Clergy Mentor component of the Special Program for the Diaconate is administered by the clergy mentor who is appointed by the local Metropolitan. The clergy mentor may be the diaconal candidate’s local parish priest; however, the local Metropolitan will determine who will serve as clergy mentors for his Metropolis.

General Information

Within the mentoring component the student works under the leadership of the clergy mentor who serves as guide. The mentor will communicate periodically with the faculty of Holy Cross on the progress of the student. The mentor is also responsible for training the future deacon as to how he will conduct his liturgical and pastoral responsibilities in conjunction with the liturgical protocols and practices of the local Metropolis under the direction of the local Metropolitan. The primary role of the clergy mentor is to:

- maintain contact with the local Metropolitan and the faculty of Holy Cross regarding the progress of the student,
- assist the student to interpret and process any ambiguities with his understanding of the Orthodox Christian tradition,
- mentor the student in limited pastoral care roles, and
- conduct liturgical skill-training.

The requirements and guidelines listed below assume a close working relationship between the clergy mentor and the student. Additionally, it is assumed that the clergy mentor has sufficient interest and time to participate in this component of the program. Both student and clergy mentor should be honest about their ability to commit to the program. It is expected that, on average, the student and clergy should spend two hours per week in some aspect of mentoring (this can include observation/participation in liturgy). Much of the mentoring can take place in terms of “shadowing”, that is, the student accompanies the clergy mentor at various activities (pastoral, educational, liturgical, administrative, etc.) where the student can observe how the clergy mentor carries out his various ministerial responsibilities.

* These are general guidelines; local Metropolitans may wish to alter or augment them based on the needs and resources of their metropolis.

It is important to note that it is the local Metropolitan who assigns the future deacon to service within the Metropolis. Although students may “train” under their parish priest and within the setting of their home parish, it is the Metropolitan who will make all pastoral assignments of the future deacon.

Specific Guidelines

1. Length of Clergy Mentor Component

- The length of the mentoring component will depend upon the time commitments of both the clergy mentor and the student. In general, the student should “shadow” the clergy mentor for a period of two years.

2. Intake and Evaluation

- Prior to beginning formal mentoring, the clergy mentor and the student will meet with the local Metropolitan to define, as best as possible, what will be the future role of the student should he eventually be ordained to the diaconate and should he, with the blessing of the local Metropolitan, be appointed to the parish at which the clergy mentor serves. By clarifying the general parameters of the future diaconal ministry of the student, the clergy mentor will thus be able to tailor the mentoring program. For example, will the future deacon participate in the administrative or educational aspects of the local parish, the parish’s pastoral outreach (e.g. visitations to hospitals, nursing homes, and shut-ins), or will his ministry focus on assistance at the liturgy and other sacraments (e.g. Holy Unction). The scope of the mentoring program will depend primarily upon the local Metropolitan’s vision of how the diaconal ministry is to function within his Metropolis. Additionally, consideration of the gifts and strengths of the student and the anticipated needs of the local parish where the student will be assigned should figure into the range of mentoring that will be undertaken.

3. Journaling

- The student is required to keep a journal for the duration of the clergy mentoring component. This journal is the place in which the student is encouraged to reflect on his educational and mentoring experiences as well as his personal calling to the diaconate. The student is expected to make entries into the journal after each mentoring (“shadowing”) experience.

4. Pastoral Conversations between Clergy Mentor and Student

- It is expected that the student will meet with his clergy mentor regularly (a minimum of one hour each month) for pastoral reflection, vocational guidance, and general discussion regarding the mentoring experience. In particular, these meetings should include a focused discussion on how the future deacon is to conduct himself in a priestly fashion within the multifarious pastoral situations of parish life.

5. Liturgical Skills for the Divine Liturgy

- The following liturgical skills form the basic “skill set” necessary for the student to be prepared to fulfill the liturgical role of the deacon during the Divine Liturgy:
 - diaconal vesting
 - proskomide and preparation of liturgical vessels
 - proper location of deacon during liturgy

- diaconal litanies
- censuring (technique and rubrics)
- small and great entrances
- reading of the gospel
- participation at the anaphora
- preparation of the eucharistic cup
- distribution of the eucharist
- consuming of the gifts
- proper storing of liturgical vessels

6. Petitions, Chanting and Reading the Gospel

- Students are expected to be able to read/chant the diaconal litanies in both Greek and English. Should the student be deficient in Greek, provisions must be made at the parish level for tutoring in the Greek language.
- An assessment of the student's ability to chant petitions needs to be made by the clergy mentor. The clergy mentor may want to seek assistance from musically trained members of the parish in aiding the student in this area.

7. Hospital, Nursing Home, Shut-In Visitations

- The student is expected to accompany the clergy mentor during twenty (20) pastoral visits to individuals in hospitals, nursing homes, and/or shut-ins. For the majority of these visits the student acts as observer and not as an active pastoral participant. For some of the twenty visits, the student, in the presence of the clergy mentor, must be an active pastoral participant. At the discretion of the clergy mentor, the student may conduct a portion of these visits alone.
- The following specific skills need to be taught as part of the visitations:
 - administering of communion
 - care of portable communion
 - acceptable prayers for shut-ins, the infirm, etc.
 - anointing with oil (Holy Unction; blessed oil; oil from votive candles)
 - appropriate pastoral care

8. Additional Sacraments, Liturgical Services and other Ministries

- Depending on the needs of a parish, the student may also be instructed in the services of baptisms, weddings, funerals, vespers, orthros, etc.
- Depending on the needs of a parish and the personal gifts of the candidate, students may also be instructed in other parish ministries such as religious education, etc.