



THE SACRAMENT OF CHURCH

6

HOLY MATRIMONY



By
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THE SACRAMENTS OF CHURCH

The Sacrament of Priesthood is a holy sacrament by which the bishop lays his hand on the head of the elected candidate so that the Holy Spirit will descend on him as the bishop prays for him, and gives him one of the priestly ranks, and he is granted authority to perform the ministry of the church whether the Holy Sacraments, doctrine and others.

+ The word “priest” is designated for a clergyman who serves people and their needs.

The verb “predict” means inform people about the will of God or foretell or prophesy, and the priest for the Jews was a person who offered sacrifices and oblations.

The priest for Christians is the candidate who is advanced to the rank of priesthood and performs religious rites. The word is derived from Kohen in Hebrew or priest.

+ The word priest in Coptic is “ⲟⲩⲏⲃ” - that is Ooab - from “ⲉⲑⲟⲩⲁⲃ” Saint or pure, as the priest is a righteous man, adorned by holiness and purity all his life.

+ In Greek: priesthood is ἱερατικόν and priests ἐρεῖς means performers, of the prayer and ministry for the congregation.

It is also called “laying of hands”, derived from Greek, corresponding to “Ordination” in Syrian and “Anointment” in Arabic, derived from anointing or

giving the seal of the Holy Spirit to the consecrated candidate.

Institution of Priesthood:

+ This sacrament was instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ when He chose the twelve of his followers, and consecrated them for ministry “He called His disciples to Him, and from them He chose twelve whom He named apostles.” *Luke 6:13*

+ These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them saying: “preach saying “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons” *Matthew 10:5-8*

+ He gave them the authority of absolution and binding: “Assuredly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” *Matthew 18:18*

+ After His resurrection He appeared to them in the upper room at Zion and said to them “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven, if you retain the sins of any, they are retained,” *John 20:22-23*

+ Only for them He said “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have

commanded you.” *Matthew 28:19,20*

+ Only to them He handed the mystery of His Holy Body and Precious Blood.

“And when the hour had come, He sat down and the twelve apostles with Him.....He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them saying “This is my Body which is given for you do this in remembrance of Me”, likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying “This is the new covenant in My Blood, which is shed for you.” *Luke 22:14-20*

The honor of Priesthood:

Priesthood is a great honor as it is a consecration of the work with God for the salvation of the souls of the people of God.

1- Priesthood is a divine call:

“and Jesus went up on the mountain and called to Him those He wanted, and they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out demons.”

Mark 3:13-15

2- Divine choice:

“Now it came to pass in those days that Jesus went out to the mountain to pray and continued all night in prayer to God, and when it was day, He called His disciples to Him and from them He chose twelve whom

He also named apostles.” *Luke 6:12,13*

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain.” *John 15:16*

3- Appointment:

“After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go.” *Luke 10:1*

4- Selection:

“As they (disciples) ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said “Now separate for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then having fasted and prayed and laid hands on them, they sent them away.” *Acts 13:2,3*. That is why our teacher St. Paul boasted saying “But when it pleased God who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace to reveal His son in me, that I might preach Him among the gentiles.” *Galatians 1:15,16*

5- Consecration:

Lord Jesus Christ says “And for their sake I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.” *John 17:19*

Sanctify means consecrate, Christ has consecrated Himself for the ministry and redemption. Also all ranks or degrees of the priesthood is consecrated for

ministry, according to the example of Christ the High Priest.

6- Faithfulness and stewardship:

The Lord said: “Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.” *Luke 12:42,43*.

“Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the Mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.”

1Cor 4:1,2

7- Priesthood is a great honor:

No-one takes this honor upon himself, he must by God just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become high priest, but it was He who said to Him “You are My Son. Today I have begotten You. As He also says in another place : “You are a priest for ever. According to the order of Melchizedek.”

Hebrews 5:4-6

Ranks of Priesthood

Priesthood has three ranks:

1. The order of Deacons
2. The order of Priests
3. The order of Bishops

Deacons are servants.

Priests are teachers.

Bishops are pastors or shepherds.

1- The order of Deacons

Deacon is a Syrian word that means servant and is pronounced in Greek as, deacon. The deacon's work is confined to helping the priest or bishop to perform the religious ministry. The first church appointed seven deacons full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom "The twelve summoned the multitude of disciples and said: "Seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom whom we may appoint over this business"

Acts 6:2,3

"When they were chosen, they set them before the apostles and when they had prayed they laid hands on them" *Acts 6:6*

They stipulated three conditions to distinguish deacons:

1. That they should be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom.
2. That they should be appointed by the apostles through the laying of hands with prayers.
3. That they should carry out certain responsibilities in the church.

Our teacher St. Paul mentioned some special qualities which deacons need, in his *First Epistle to Timothy 3:8-13*

"Likewise deacons must be:

- 1) reverent
- 2) not double tongued
- 3) not given too much wine (drunkenness)
- 4) not greedy for money

- 5) holding the mystery of faith with a pure conscience
- 6) ruling their children and their houses well
- 7) should be tested first, and then proved and found blameless, so they can be ordained" *1 Tim 3:10*

Though this rank is the beginning of priestly ranks and the most junior but St. Paul praises it saying:

"For those who served well as deacons, obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." *1Tim 3:13*

The rank of deaconry has five degrees that we mention, in ascending order:

- 1) Epsaltos (hymnist)
- 2) Anagnostis (reader)
- 3) Epodeacon (assistant deacon) (subdeacon)
- 4) Deacon (proper deacon)
- 5) Archdeacon (leader of deacons)

We talk about each degree regarding its conditions, clothing, work and rite of ordination.



1- EPSALTOS

Epsaltos is derived from a Coptic word Epsalmos which means Psalm or hymn, so it means hymnist.

+ His work is obvious from his name, that is hymns, and praises – learning and singing them in church. This rank is mentioned in some of the early church canon “hymnists also must be blessed by the bishop”

+ Children may be ordained (at the age of junior or high school) as Epsaltos, as the Psalm says: “Out of the mouth of babes and infants You have ordained strength” *Psalm 8:2*. The wisdom of children’s ordination is relating them to the church so they grow up in church, nourished by the milk of faith, dogma and rites, taste them and be filled, so they become steadfast in the Orthodox doctrine, clinging to it with a high level of spirituality and holiness as they grow in church, as the Psalm says “But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God.....I will praise you for ever” *Psalm 52:8*

+ The Epsaltos is permitted to wear the tunic without the stole.

Epsaltos Rite

+ After the Reconciliation Prayer of the divine liturgy, the archdeacon or hegomen brings along the children to be ordained in the rank of epsaltos. They stand before the altar in reverence and awe, so the bishop comes and advises them adequately like regular church attendance, lessons of learning hymns, Sunday School classes, also quietness and decency whether in church, home or street. He advises them about obedience and care against insults, lies and swearing, also regular confession to the priest and receiving the Holy Communion.

+ He must be sure that they came to church fasting-without eating or drinking anything as they will receive the Holy Communion at the end of the Mass.

+ The bishop must get a verbal undertaking from their parents to help them to fulfill these commandments, and not forbid them from coming to church for any reason. Then he commands the priest to follow them up and care for them spiritually, accept their confession. He asks the church hymnist or the adult deacons to promise to explain certain simple rites to them and teach them hymns.

Then he starts their ordination into the rank of EPSALTOS.

What is said in Epsaltos ordination:

Our Father.....Thanksgiving Prayer.

+ Our good God Who raised Heman and Asaaf to sing in Your holy places Who gave David the prophet to sing by the flute, harp and ten chords, Who said “Out of the mouth of babes and Infants You have ordained strength.” You who placed praise in Your holy church, and Your congregation worships You by Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. We ask You Lord to grant Your servants Your grace to become Epsaltos in Your holy church and praise You by hymns, song and spiritual praises, singing with their hearts to the Lord, by grace and compassion of Your Only Begotten Son...etc.

+ O Master, Lord, God the Pantocrator, the Father of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ, we ask and entreat Your goodness, O Philanthropic One, for Your servants standing before You, who came to Your universal, Apostolic church, to be worthy to start faithfully and adore You in purity. Enlighten them by the sweetness of Your holy words. Grant them to sing spiritual hymns with understanding. Sanctify them. Bless them. Fill them with Your fear. Protect them by Your angelical power. Enrich them by all good gift and perfect talent, to live by Your holy, blessed will. May they grow into the perfection of Your

Holy Spirit. By Your Only Begotten Son our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ. Glory honor, dominion and worship are due to You together with Him and the Life-Giving and consubstantial Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

The three signs: (Name) Epsaltos for the holy church of God.....Amen.

+ The first, the child is signed three times without laying of hands, while saying Name ... Epsaltos for the holy church.....

1. Khen evran...Blessed is God the Father
2. Blessed in His Only Begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ (for the second sign)
3. Blessed is the Holy Spirit the Paraclete (for the third sign)

+ After the end of signs, children are handed the service tunics with stoles to be signed by the bishop thrice, then they wear them.

+ They stand before the adult deacons at the deacons' chorus, share the liturgy's service with them with what hymns and responses they know.

+ By the end of the Mass, they receive the Holy Communion after the deacons. Their folks rejoice for them. Then they come to church regularly to grow up in virtues and worshipping to become blameless saints.

(1) ARCHIEPSALTOS

+ The church's hymnist may be ordained in the rank of Archi-Epsaltos, specially if he is blind and cannot read, so is not ordained in the rank of Ognostis or reader. Archi-Epsaltos is the leader of hymnists and leads the deacons' chorus outside the altar during the responses and hymns of the divine liturgy or any other ritual services.

+ After the Prayer of Reconciliation the bishop stands at the altar's door, facing west. The person required to be ordained as Archi-Epsaltos is presented to him, bowing and standing reverently with the tunic. Then the bishop starts the ordination prayer as follows:

Prayer read for the ARCHI-EPSALTOS, leader of hymnists

+ O Master, Lord, God the Pantocrator, Who is in heaven and accepts pure souls through all generations. Make a sign with Your servant (...Name) and make him one with Your righteous, a leader of hymnists like David. Keep him undefiled to the end of ages.

+ Accomplish his offering. Grant him a blameless search for praises. Keep him in all deeds. Grant him purity in all good work, and

may he conquer all the enemies. Nourish him by pure teachings and heavenly praises. Empower him at all times to fulfill Your will always. Grant him mercy and grace before Your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Glory, honor, dominion and worship are due to You together with Him and the Life-Giving Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

Kiryeyson 3 times

We ask You our Lord, God, the Philanthropic One, send the grace of Your Holy Spirit upon Your servant standing before You, to become a leader of hymnists. Fill him with power and righteousness to become an example to all and present to Your divine majesty praises of joy and salvation. Spiritual praises from the heart not lips, adoring You in spirit, truth and understanding. Grant him wisdom to manage the rank of Epsaltos, a good, spiritual management.

+ Keep him from the traps of the devil and grant him to become a holy altar for You, to be accepted before You always. Grant him goodness and humbleness of heart, meekness, faith, hope and love so his heart may abide by grace and praises, not by foods that do not benefit those who had them (*Hebrews 9:11-13*)

+ Bless him and his service, accept his praises and prayers as sweet incense.

+ Through the grace, mercy, and love of Your Only Begotten Son Jesus Christ. Glory, honor, dominion and worship are due to You together with Him and the Life-Giving and consubstantial Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

+ He signs him at first by the cross (without laying of hands), saying:
Archi-Epsaltos for the church..... finishes the rest of the three signs as usual.

+ The bishop signs the tunic 3 signs and dresses him.

+ He stands in his place at the chorus, and at the end of the Mass receives the Holy Communion.



2- ANAGNOSTIS

This is Greek word composed of two parts:- the first derived from a word called ANAGNOSMA which means class, the second TEEC which means related to. Thus the meaning of the word Anagnostis is related to the epistle, and it means the reader of the epistles.

Conditions of ordination:-

1. Age not less than 18 years in normal conditions.
2. Testified by all for good manner and deeds.
3. To be recommended by the priest and congregation, without any objection from anyone.
4. To be tested for good reading from the Holy Bible and understands what he reads.
5. Practice spiritual virtues and means of grace like Confession, Communion, reading of the Holy Bible and coming to church.
6. He must be ready for service and full of zeal.
7. Humble and not priding with the congregation, or boasting about his voice or work.

His work:-

1. Daily readings in church specially the epistles in Coptic, English and Arabic so he must know by heart the introduction and end of every epistle in Coptic and Arabic or English, reading without mistakes so that the congregation may understand what is read.

Introduction of Pauline epistle:-

A chapter from the Epistle of our teacher St. Paul to May his blessings be upon us. Amen.

After the Pauline Epistle is read:- The grace of God the Father be with you my folks and brothers. Amen.

Introduction of the Catholic epistles:- Which are universal epistles.

The Catholic Epistle from the Epistle of our teacher May his blessings be upon us. Amen.

After the Catholic Epistle is read:-

Do not love the world, nor things which are in the world. The world shall pass away and all its desires, but he who does the will of God shall abide forever. Amen.

Introduction of the Praxis:-

A chapter from the Acts of our fathers the pure apostles, may their holy blessings be with us all my fathers and brethren. Amen.

After the Acts of the apostles is read:-

The word of the Lord shall grow, multiply, be mighty and be confirmed in the holy church of God. Amen.

After the epistle is read, the Anagnostis (reader) must kneel before the altar and kiss the cross and the priest's his humbleness before God and the and does not boast with his voice or good reading.

2. Reciting the names of the fathers Patriarchs who passed away in the Lord:-

After the Commemoration of the Saints, the deacon inside the altar says:- Let those who read, recite the names of our holy fathers, the patriarchs who have fallen asleep; O Lord repose their souls and forgive us our sins.

3. Praises and hymns:- That is receiving the church Tasbeha (Praises) and hymns, and reciting them with the chorus during the Liturgy and other occasions.

4. Doctrine and sermons:- As mentioned in the rite of ordination of an Anagnostis "Lord show Your Face to Your servant standing before You, to know by Your holy words and preach Your laws to Your people, teach them Your pure words for their rescue and salvation.

In the commandment he says: " You must learn chapter by chapter the books of the Holy Bible, the breath of Hod, for which you were entrusted to teach the people."

But the practices doctrine and sermons by a permission from the bishop or priest in his presence or absence.

Order of ordination of Ognostos:-

- 1- After the Reconciliation Prayer he is ordained.
- 2- He stands before the altar with the tunic (he may carry it folded on his arm), with a bowing head,

reverently before the Lord, ready to carry the burden of the rank and service. The Bishop stands at the altar's door, facing west.

- 3- The priests and individuals from the congregation who recommended him, stand behind him before the altar, bowing on his behalf before the altar and the bishop, requesting his ordination and undertaking for him before God and the bishop.
- 4- The bishop asks the congregation in church saying: Do you witness that he is truly worthy of this rank? They respond saying: Yes we witness he is worthy.
- 5- The Bishop takes scissors and cuts his hair as five crosses. One in the middle of the head, and four along the sides, while saying: (Name) Anagnostis for the church

Khen Evran Evesmaroot

That is:- In the Name of the Father ... Blessed be God the Father the Pantocrator His Only-Begotten Son Jesus Christ Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete. Amen.

He says the three signs and the congregation says AMEN after.

Notes:-

- 1- The bishop's question to the congregation: Is he worthy is important for a declared witnessing before God and the church about his worthiness and compatibility. The Apostle says: "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." *2Tim 2:2*.
- 2- Hair-cutting denotes cutting off bad habits as well

as evil thoughts.

- 3- Haircut on the shape of the cross, while mentioning the Holy Trinity is a proof of the graces and talents that he gets from the Holy Trinity by the worthiness of Christ's death on the cross.
- 4- The five crosses denote the five wounds of Christ Lord, which are the three nails, then the crown of thorns and the stab. As if he says: "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death." *Philip 3:10*.
- 5- The bishop cuts each one's hair individually on the shape of five crosses by the three signs. After he finishes from them altogether, they stand up in one or two rows for prayers and commandment to be read.
- 6- The bishop prays the Thanksgiving prayer, then raises the incense by the censer at the four directions.
- 7- He faces the west and prays: "We ask and entreat Your goodness O Lord God the Pantocrator, accept Your servant (Name) an Ognostis in Your house. Give him reverence in worshipping You. Make him worthy to touch the utensils and become an honorable Ognostis before You."

Note:- The Ognostis has a right of touching the altar's sacred vessels by the white linen veil, to dry them after Mass and place them at the place specified for them.

- 8- The bishop faces the east saying this prayer:-
"O great God, rich in His talents Come and

fill him by all wisdom and understanding keep him blameless in Your worshipping.”

9- At the end of the prayer the congregation says this response:-

“Lord hear us
Lord have mercy upon us
Lord bless us”

This response is said at the end of every prayer of the ordinations prayers.

10- The bishop faces the west while he holds his temples with his hands saying:- “O God, holder of all by Your right show Your face to Your servant to vow by Your holy sayings and preach Your commandments to Your people grant him a humble heart to read and study Your laws to edify himself and his listeners.”

Note:- The bishop’s hand denotes the hand of God that holds the human mind to open his intellectual ability and free his tongue to teach and preach the powerful living word of God.

11- The bishop faces east praying: “O Master and Lord Who chose His servant Ezra and gave him wisdom to read Your law to Your people grant him wisdom and spirit of prophecy to recite Your holy sayings blamelessly to your people.”

Note:- It is very important for his reputation to be blameless, applying his words to his deeds so he might not stumble any one, but have a useful pure service for every one according to the example of Ezra the great writer.

12- The bishop (or archdeacon if present) reads for him this commandment:-

- (i) Learn chapter by chapter of the Holy Bible
- (ii) To read with understanding the Lord’s commandments “May the reader understand” and Ognostis means reader
- (iii) You preach the people
- (iv) Your reputation must be pure as a lamp-stand on the tower to enlighten all around him by his words.

13- At the end of the prayers the bishop signs the vestments of service and they put them on, stand with the chorus and share with the responses and hymns.

14- At the end of the mass they receive the Holy Communion, after the bishop drinks of the precious Blood and before he drinks water, he breathes in their faces one by one saying: “receive the Holy Spirit.”

15- A procession is made for them around the altar and the church and all rejoice.

The Ognostis vestments:-

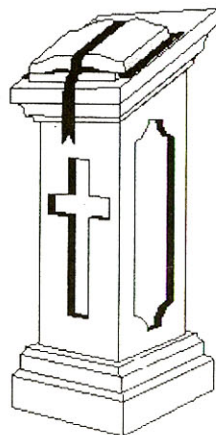
- 1- The Ognostis wears a white tunic as white is appropriate for the service of God the One dressed in light, Who transfigured and His clothes became shining, exceedingly white *Mark 9:3*. White color denotes purity which must adorn every deacon and all other priesthood ranks.
- 2- He wears the stole crosswise over the left shoulder and as a belt in front, and the ends hanging from the shoulders.

Notes:-

- 1- Stole is a Greek word Patrachelion or grace, the rank of deacon is a grace which is taken by an individual and carried on his shoulders.
- 2- It hangs on the back like a cross as if he shares in carrying the cross as the Lord says: "If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me" *Matthew 16:24*.
- 3- The stole looks like a belt in front, as a proof of preparation and readiness for service like John the Baptist who was wearing a leather belt around his waist.

Rules for Ognostis:-

- 1- No laying of hands on him but only his hair is cut.
- 2- He may marry after getting his rank, and if his wife dies, he may remarry, different from senior priestly ranks.



3- EPODEACON

Epodeacon is a Greek word composed of two parts:-Epo means below or assistant, Diacon means deacon. So it means assistant deacon.

Conditions of ordination:-

- 1- Age, not less than 20 years in normal conditions, unless he shows excellence in ecclesiastical subjects and elderly wisdom, with saintly faithfulness evident in his manners.
- 2- To be recommended by the congregation and choir.
- 3- To be witnessed by everybody for righteous manner and good deed.

His work:-

- 1- Watching the doors of the church from heretics and false teachers.
- 2- Organize the participants in church, men in their place, women in their place, virgins and nuns in their place, widows in their place and so on.
- 3- Lighting the church's lamps.
- 4- Keeping the church's books, priestly and servants vestments.
- 5- Making the censers ready.
- 6- Help the deacon and replacing him if necessary.

Note:- These jobs are added to the previous ones while he was an ognostis, and do not cancel them as he may act as ognostis if needed.

The rite of his ordination:-

- 1- He stands before the altar without the tunic while kneeling and bowing the head, after the Reconciliation Prayer.
- 2- The bishop prays with the attendants the Thanksgiving prayer, then raises the incense in the four directions
- 3- The bishop facing the east while praying this prayer: O Almighty Lord accept the epodeaconship of Your servant (Name) standing here perfect awaiting Your heavenly talents.
- 4- The archdeacon says: The grace of You Lord Jesus Christ perfecting our weakness, may come upon the brother whose name was mentioned for epodeaconship rank etc.

Note:- The ordination right is specific for bishops only but priests or archdeacon my share with some prayers.

- 5- The bishop prays facing eastwards:-
Yes Lord make him worthy of the invitation for epodeaconship.
- 6- The congregation responds: Lord hear us, Lord have mercy on us, Lord bless us. This response is said at the end of every supplication of the ordinations, or Lord have mercy thrice with the same tune.
- 7- The bishop looks towards the west, and holds his temples praying:-
“O Lord, Master and Pantocrator show Your face to Your servant (Name) to become an

epodeacon. Fill him with Your Holy Spirit to become worthy to touch the sacred vessels of service.”

Note:- He touches it by a white linen veil to dry it after the Mass and keeps it.

- 8- The bishop faces east and prays:
“Lord look to our service send to Your servant (Name) Your grace to be worthy to complete his epodeaconship blamelessly.”
- 9- The bishop anoints his forehead by his right thumb, saying:
“We call you in the holy church of God. Amen.”
The congregation respond: Amen.
- 10- The archdeacon says: (Name) an epodeacon for the holy house of God, Amen.
The congregation respond: Amen.
- 11- He signs him thrice on his forehead by his thumb (without laying of hands) saying:-
“We call you (Name) an epodeacon for the church in the Name of the Father BlessedThen the second and third sign, and with each sign the congregation respond: Amen.”
At these signs the Holy Spirit dwells upon him and gives him gifts of service required of him.
- 12- The bishop faces east and prays thanksgiving prayer, to thank God for fulfilling this ordination saying:
“I thank You O Master Pantocrator give him reverence and purity to become perfect in all works of service”

13- He dresses him the tunic and stole after signing them, while saying: "Glory and honor peace and edification Amen." Then he recites for him the specific commandment for epodeacons:

"My son you are entrusted for a good rank you become a follower of the deacon, help him in service and guard the doors of the church and keep order in it"

14- At the end of the Mass he receives the Holy Communion, and the breath from the bishop and they make a procession for him in church, to rejoice for this ordination.

The Epodeacons vestments:

Like the Ognostis vestments with the same order, the stole is tied as a belt in front which means an obligation of duties and services and dedication to the church rules which he must follow and behave accordingly.

Note:- If there is no stole during the ordination he may tie a red linen waist band instead of it. The waist band is just a ribbon make of red linen.

Its rules:-

- 1- No laying of hands on him and his hair is not cut but only signed.
- 2- He may marry after his ordination without losing it.

4- DEACON

It is a Syrian word that means servant, with a Greek synonym Diakon and in Coptic a country servant.

Conditions of his ordination:-

- 1- Age no less than 25 years
- 2- Should pass a test period and discipleship to reach maturity needed for the service responsibility according to the apostle's words:- "Let these also first be proved, then let them serve as deacons, faithful in all thing." *1 Tim 3:10*
- 3- To be an example in speaking, attitude, love and purity, watching himself, caring for his spiritual and eternal life.
- 4- To be meek, content, not loving money, able to bear tribulation of the service without any complaint, has principles, not favouring the rich or prominent, on account of others.
- 5- Should keep reading and studying to edify himself spiritually and grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 6- To be witnessed by believers for chastity, honesty and love of peace.
- 7- To be recommended by the church's congregation as he is worthy of this rank.

These conditions must be necessary specially when the deacon is ordained as a full time consecrated person for church service.

His work:-

- 1- Reciting the responses of the litanies prayed by the presbyter during the raising of incense and Liturgy.
 - 2- Notifying the congregation for start of prayers.
 - 3- Notifying them to be orderly, quiet and stand during praying with reverence, awe and purity.
 - 4- Helping the presbyter for visiting the church's congregation.
 - 5- Writing names of those who offer gifts, oblations to church to be remembered by the minister after the Litanies of oblations as written in the Diaskoleya:-
 - 6- "The deacons write every day the names of whoever gives offerings, whether dead or alive, to be remembered during reading and prayer" (Diaskoleya 35)
- There was a private room at the western door of the church called the "deacon's room" where the deacon sits and receives gifts and offering of church attendants, in private, before they enter to church – he writes their names or name of the dead for whom gifts are offered, then gives these names to the minister to mention them one by one after the Litany of Oblations during the divine Liturgy.
- 7- Cleaning the altar and putting in order the tabernacle and wipe off the dust before the

- priest comes and cares for the tabernacle's covering.
- 8- Reads the Holy Gospel of the divine Liturgy, during the deacon's ordination, the bishop says: " he is honored to recite and read the Gospel."
 - 9- He carries the chalice and gives the congregation from the Precious Blood by a permission from the presbyter, when necessary.
 - 10- During the deacon's ordination, the bishop says to him: " Understand the extent of honor given to you to carry it, which is the Precious True Blood giving salvation to the world."
 - 11- Service of widows and orphans, needy, sick and imprisoned. The bishop says to him: " visit the Lord's congregation, and widows, orphans, oppressed and help whoever you can, paying their needs and becoming an example for them to see your good deeds"
 - 12- Teaching and preaching by a permission of the bishop or priest.
 - 13- Recites the deacon's responses inside the altar, as the Liturgical responses inside the altar is only for the deacon and archdeacon. In the past no one enters the altar except bishops and priests and deacons (deacon and archdeacon), also kings who are believers anointed by Chrism.

- 14- He shares with the bishop or presbyter in all ritual prayers like Baptism – Myron – Lakkan – Consecration of the church – Ordinations – Ritual celebrations of feasts and others.

The Rite of the deacon's ordination:-

- 1- Fulfilled after the Reconciliation Prayer.
- 2- After accurate proving of the elected person from priests and congregation, a certificate of approval is handed as he is worthy, to stand before the altar without a tunic, while bowing the head reverently.
- 3- The bishop and attendants say a thanksgiving prayer together, then the bishop raises incense in the four directions.
- 4- The bishop says this prayer facing east:
“O Almighty Lord accept the deaconship of Your servant (Name) standing awaiting Your heavenly gift.”
- 5- The archdeacon says this declaration: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ perfecting our weakness, may come upon (Name).
- 6- The bishop faces the west, places his right hand on his head while saying this prayer:
“O Master Lord the Pantocrator, show Your face to Your servant (Name) who came forward to the deaconship Fill him with Your Holy Spirit, wisdom and power”
- 7- The bishop faces the east and prays saying:

“Yes Lord make him worthy for the call of deaconship then this prayer: “Lord look upon us and to our service, purify us from every blemish and send from heaven Your grace to Your servant (Name) to become worthy to accomplish Your service blamelessly ...

- 8- The bishop looks towards the west, signs his forehead by his thumb thrice saying: (Name) deacon for the altar of the church Khen Evran Evesmaroot for the second sign (Name) deacon for the church Evesmaroot (third sign). And every time, the congregation says: Amen.

Note:- Here the Holy Spirit dwells upon him and gives him gifts of service.

- 9- The bishop faces east and prays saying:
“Thank You O Master Lord the mystery of deaconship (laying of hands) which is given to Your servant (Name) through the dwelling of Your Holy Spirit upon him. Straighten the call of his election by purity and the grace of Your goodness.
- 10- The bishop faces west, signs the service vestments specific for deacons that is the tunic and stole, then dresses him with the tunic and places the stole on his left shoulder, while saying: “Glory and honor to the All-Holy Trinity: the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Peace and edification

into the one, holy, universal and apostolic church of God. Amen.

- 11- He recites the commandment for him saying: "My son you are entrusted for this service, so you must fulfil what is given to you and make it"
- 12- The deacon enters the altar, kneels before the altar and stands on the right side of the altar, while the deacons are singing the AKSIOS hymn.
- 13- He shares with the responses inside the tabernacle till the end of the Mass, then he receives the Holy Communion.
- 14- After the bishop receives the precious Blood, he breathes into his face saying: "Accept the Holy Spirit"
- 15- A procession is made for him to rejoice for this grace.

The complete deacon's vestments:

- 1- The complete deacon (diacon) and archdeacon (leader of deacons) wear the tunic and a red stole denoting cleansing by the Blood of Christ. The stole must hang on the left shoulder denoting carrying the cross. The hem of the stole denotes angle's wings as St. John Crysostom says: "Notice the spiritual joy, you who resemble angels by wearing the nice stoles that is placed on your left shoulders"

- 2- The deacon and archdeacon may wear head cover decorated by the cross and some pictures of Christ and the Saints, some deacons still use it in some churches but it disappeared from other churches but it is preferable to use it as it is an old heritage.

Some rules for deacons and archdeacons

- 1- If his ordination is accomplished before marriage, he does not marry.
- 2- If his wife died after his ordination he stays without marriage, like the case of the priest. If he marries, he loses the deacon's rank.

Some ritual and spiritual duties specified for deacons:-

- 1- All ranks of deacons:- must care to study Coptic Language as it is related to all church's rites, readings, hymns and Tasbeha, so that they read Tasbeha and hymns in Coptic, not Coptic written in Arabic.
- 2- They must take care to receive and keep hymns, using continually.
- 3- Ritual discipleship must occur with a church's hymnist or a capable elderly deacon.
- 4- Actual partaking in Liturgy and Tasbeha is a must.

- 5- Must attend the Mass early. Any deacon who comes after the servants absolution has no right to wear the tunic and serve. If he comes after the Liturgy's Gospel, he must not be allowed to receive the Communion.
- 6- Wearing the tunic every mass is a must, and serving in the altar or outside. But specially serving in the altar must not be without wearing the tunic. As long as the deacon has worn the tunic and served in the Mass, so he must receive Communion. It is a big ritual mistake for a deacon to wear the tunic, serve in the mass and does not receive Communion.
- 7- The tunic must be presented to the priest to sign it before the deacon wears it. Signing the tunic by the priest is important for the following reasons:-
 - (i) It is considered as a permission for the deacon to serve in the Mass.
 - (ii) It is considered as a permission for the deacon to receive Holy Communion.
 - (iii) Declaration that this deacon has no excommunication or church rules.

If reflects an image of submission of the deacon to the priest, the young to the old from him as "Now and all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better." *Heb 7:7*

- 8- When the tunic is signed, the deacon must be holding the tunic and stole with both hand, submitting his head before the priest, or kneeling down on his knees to accept the sign and blessing from the priest.
- 9- After the signing, the deacon kisses the cross and the priest's hand.
- 10- During wearing the tunic, the deacon recites Psalms 29, 92, "I will exalt You O Lord" & "The Lord reigns, He is clothed with majesty"
- 11- The deacon must not go out of church by the tunic as it is a vestment for service in church only.
- 12- The tunic must be undressed at the end of the mass after the dismissal of the sacrifice's angel, not before.
- 13- During undressing the tunic, Psalm 47 "O clap your hands O you people!" is read.
- 14- All deacons in the churches must take care to attend the vespers and Tasbeha.
- 15- Every deacon must have a confession father to practice confession once a month and receive Holy communion at every mass he serves, if there are no objections.
- 16- During distribution of Communion, the hymnist and deacons alternate singing, so that no one refrain from Communion as he is too busy every mass with hymns.
- 17- Deacons hold candles in these occasions:-
 - (i) At choosing the Lamb until placing it

- on the paten and the Wine in the chalice.
- (ii) At reading the Gospel in Coptic and Arabic.
 - (iii) During the second signs, starting at: the Holy Body until the end of the Confession.
- 18- The deacon must not go out with the censer after the incense for the Diptych that follows the Commemoration of Saints, or blows incense from the censer at people's faces as he distracts them from worshipping and concentration of praying and preoccupies them from the sacrifice on the altar.
 - 19- No deacon talks to his companion during the divine Liturgy or entry and exit from the tabernacle for no reason.
 - 20- There must be an archdeacon for the church or a coordinator for deacons who is the eldest or the most ancient in ordination, to put in order the service of deacons correctly.
 - 21- There must be held a weekly meeting for deacons, to learn written studies, rites, dogmas, hymns and spiritual matters. Arabic and Coptic readings and service inside and outside the tabernacle must be distributed for deacons according to their ranks and ability of service and reading.
 - 22- The deacon who is absent from the mass, or does not wear the tunic, loses his right and turn for reading and service and awaits his next turn.
 - 23- Readings of feasts and major occasions are distributed as a reward for deacons who come regularly to the masses and church services, all around the year, with the knowledge of the archdeacon or the deacons coordinator.
 - 24- If a deacon mistook and a rule of repentance was imposed on him, he must perform it with submission without complaint or pride, to learn the ethics of service of deacons, its value and spirituality.
 - 25- The deacon must not pride with his voice in the responses or hymns or readings but prays reverently and humbly.
 - 26- The deacon must not crowd his fellow deacons or oppress them or pride against them, but deal with all in love.
 - 27- The deacon must not smoke cigarettes or drink alcohol, not to stumble others.
 - 28- The deacon must take care of sins of the tongue like insults and swearing, lies, gossips so God accepts his service and prayers "Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and curses. My brethren, these things ought not to be so." *James 3:10*. Blessing is praising and prayers, curse is insults, swearing and others.
 - 29- Every deacon must be committed to all conditions and duties of the deacon's rank, like the style of wearing the stole, or service

inside and outside the tabernacle and the recitation of readings without surpassing them.

- 30- The deacon must serve a spiritual service in church like service at Sunday Schools and other meetings, besides serving as a deacon, as the deacon is a servant full of the Holy Spirit, wisdom and knowledge, not only a parrot reciting same responses and hymns.
- 31- Every deacon must try to perform the social and spiritual advises that our teacher St. Paul ordered all ranks of deacons (*1Timothy 3:8-12*) "For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus" *1Tim 3:13*
- 32-The deacon must be totally knowledgeable about the various ecclesiastical subjects, not only about ritual matters.
- 33- The priest or archdeacon or the coordinator of the service of deacons must care to perform all these conditions and duties so the deacons may serve a quiet, blessed service without troubles, so their service is useful and their prayers acceptable "God is a Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth." *John 4:24*

5- ARCHDEACON

It is a Greek word composed of two parts

+ Arch - means leader

+ Diakon - means deacon

The word thus means leader of deacons

Conditions of his ordination

- 1- To be well knowledgeable and experienced about the Holy Books, totally learned about the work of the hymnist, organist, epodeacon and deacon, that is the ranks of deacons led by him.
- 2- Perfectly learned about church Rites and hymns in all church occasions.
- 3- Age no less than 28 years.
- 4- To be witnessed by all for virtues conduct, good deed and blameless.
- 5- To be recommended by the choir and the congregation.

His work:-

- 1- Leading all the ranks of deacons, managing their needs and specifying all their deeds.
- 2- Becomes like the ear and eye of the bishop telling him about the situations of the congregation day by day.
- 3- He presents those chosen for the various ranks of deacons.

Rite of his ordination:-

- 1- The ordination takes places after the Reconciliation Prayer.
- 2- He stands before the tabernacle with a bowing head.
- 3- The bishop hears the congregation witnessing after looking at the given recommendation about him.
- 4- The bishop prays saying: “O great merciful Lord send the grace of Your Holy Spirit upon Your servant (Name) who is called for the leadership of deacons fill him with wisdom and power like Stephen the first leader of deacons.”
 - (i) To hold the chalice of the Precious Blood of the Blameless Lamb.
 - (ii) To serve the orphans and widows.
 - (iii) To care for the worshippers. Teach the ignorant, rebuke the rude, scold the disobedient, return the lost and organize the deacons.
 - (iv) Serve strangers.
 - (v) Become an example for everyone in the church.
- 5- The deacon says: Pray
The congregation respond: Lord have mercy.
- 6- The bishop prays:- “Now also our King we ask and entreat Your Good Philanthropic One for Your servant (Name) to make him worthy for the call of leadership of deacons

by the dwelling of Your Holy Spirit upon him

- 7- The bishop signs him thrice, dresses him with the service vestments. The tunic and stole as he did at the ordination of the deacon.
- 8- He enters to the tabernacle and attends the mass, partaking in the responses.
- 9- He receives from the Holy Mysteries.
- 10- A procession is made for him in church to rejoice for this eminent rank.

His vestment: Like the deacon’s vestments.

His rules: Like the deacon’s rules.

The Rite of undoing the deacon’s waist band:-

There is a specific rite for undoing the waist band for deacons, done by the end of the mass and procession in church for the new deacons.

- + The bishop prays the thanksgiving Prayer, raising of Pauline incense, Psalm 50, then the deacons sing the Tai-Shoori hymn, One of the deacons read the Pauline epistle from the first epistle of St. Paul to his disciple, the bishop Timothy 3:8-10.
- + Agios is said three times, then the Litany of the Gospel.

- + Psalm 133:1 is read "Praise the name of the Lord, O you servants of the Lord! you who stand in the house of the Lord."
- + The Gospel of *St. John 17:24-26* is read. It is about love which is the foundation of every service and every rank established for the service.
- + One of the priests says the Litanies of Peace and Fathers, then the bishop says the Litany of Gatherings.
- + They say:- The Orthodox Creed, then this supplication:- We ask and entreat Your goodness O Philanthropic One to make Your servant worthy of the community of deacons bless him abide in him
- + After the commandment is read, the bishop undoes the deacon's waist band. Unfortunately this rite is no more performed, and the deacon's waist band is undone without any prayers, most of the time.

DEACONESSES IN CHURCH

In the early church there were deaconesses helping the Apostles and later the bishops and priests with some service matters. That service was organized only for those elderly of sixty years of age and most probably a widow for one man. The Apostolic rules imposed a condition that the deaconess must be a virgin or widow of one man and is sixty years old. St. Paul cared about the subject of widow deaconesses in the first church and wrote about it in the fifth chapter of his first epistle to his disciple Timothy. According to our teacher St. Paul's words, conditions of a successful deaconess can be specified:-

- 1- A widow who has been the wife of one man *1Tim 5:9* or virgin.
- 2- If a widow, must not be under sixty years so she is not a reason of stumbling for the service because of her youth or intention of remarrying.
- 3- Commended for vitreous manners, good deeds and previous service. "lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she diligently followed every good work, with a reputation for good works, if she has brought up children."

Examples of these successful deaconesses is Phoebe who was commended by St. Paul for the church of Rome when she was gone there: "I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church of Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also." *Rom 16:1,2* She wrote the epistles to the Romans as dictated by our teacher St. Paul, carried it to the believers in Rome.

We also hear about other deaconess, and a disciple of St. Paul, called Tekla, she believed, was baptized and became a disciple of St. Paul who assigned her for service in Iconia, her original homeland. She faced many tribulations and torture, but the Lord saved her every time, she spent all her life in service, when she was eighty years old, she secluded herself for adoration and meditation, then peacefully passed away in good old age after a faithful long service.

The Greek Sixaxarium praised her saying, "Hail to St. Tekla the martyr without shedding of blood"

The Coptic church celebrates her death on the 23rd of the month of Toot every year, the blessing of her prayers may be with us. Amen. Since the thirteenth century, the service of consecrated deaconesses in church was

abolished, but due to the urgent need for the service of women in church, His Holiness Pope Shenouda decided to return this rite by consecration of a large number of deaconesses for the service of Cairo churches – that was at the Pentecost feast on 1981 – Now some bishops establish some consecrated ones for service in their dioceses.

The Holy Synod decided, at its session on Saturday at the Pentecost feast of 1992, the rite of consecration of the consecrated, and approved certain notes specific for this rite as inseparable.

These are some notes:

- 1- It is well known that the rank of deaconess in church is not a priestly rank. There is no Priesthood for women. St. Mary the mother of the Incarnate God and the Lady of the heavenly and earthly did not have any priestly rank, although she was a spiritual mother for the apostles and was accompanying them in service.
- 2- The ranks of deaconesses are noticeable in the previous rite:- Ognostis – Epodeacon – Deacon. The present use is: consecrated – assistant deaconess – deaconess.
- 3- The rite is called the Rite of consecration of the consecrated.

- 4- It is performed without laying of hands, opposite to what is followed in priestly ordinations, but she is consecrated by a bishop.
- 5- These prayers take place in a private mass for women as their service is not for all the congregation, but for a specific sector of them.
- 6- These prayers are not after the Reconciliation Prayer so they are not considered as priestly dedication.
- 7- Consecration time takes place after the morning raising of incense and starts by pronouncing the word (Name) consecrated or assistant deacon for
- 8- The deaconesses consecration is accomplished by the bishop saying:- “We call you (Name) a deaconess for the Holy Coptic Orthodox Church of God.” But for the rank of consecrated and assistant deaconess the word “We call you” is omitted.
- 9- Signs are mentioned without specification of a certain church.
- 10-If there is a meeting for children or women, she may teach, but cannot teach men in church or a common meeting attended by men. This is according to the commandment of our teacher St. Paul “And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man but to be in silence” *1 Tim 2:12*
- 11-In private masses for nuns or consecrated girls, they are not permitted to read the epistles but the priest or deacon reads.

12-Consecration of the consecrated is done by the bishop, and the priest has no right for consecration in his church without the knowledge of the bishop, as the bishop is responsible for the consecration not the priest.

The Rite of Consecration of the consecrated women in the Coptic Orthodox Church:-

+ The person advancing for consecration reads the appropriate undertaking, then stands before the tabernacle bowing her head humbly.

First : Undertaking of the consecrated and assistant deaconess:-

I the weak request my acceptance in the way of consecration for the Coptic Orthodox Church, undertake before the altar of God, and before our father His Holiness Pope / His grace the Metropolitan / Bishop, to commit to the commandments of the Holy Bible and the Coptic Orthodox dogma, practicing the Sacrament of Confession and Communion, struggling of spiritual life, faithfulness in responsibility, good dealing with others and submission to church leadership represented by His Holiness Pope/ His grace Metropolitan/ Bishop

And as I am getting the blessing of dressing the garment today the(date) undertake that

the continuation of my dressing is conditional to my commitment to the way of consecration to the end by the grace of God.

Please pray for me. This is a bowing – Absolve me and bless me my master Your Holiness Pope / Your Grace Metropolitan / Bishop.

+ Then “Our Father Who art in heaven” and Thanksgiving Prayer are said.

+ The bishop recites for her the following prayers:

Second: The Prayers

“O Lord Wise in His counseling, Who created human beings on Your likeness and image: Male and female, He created and blessed. We ask You Lord hear us and have mercy upon us.” Lord have mercy.

“Lord Who granted sonship to Mary the sister of Moses and Aaron, and to Deborah, Kalda, Anna daughter of Phaniel, and allowed Philip the preacher to have virgin daughters who prophesy, we ask You Lord hear and have mercy upon us.” Lord have mercy.

“You Who poured Your Holy Spirit on men and women altogether and gave them talents of the Spirit

We ask You Lord hear us and have mercy upon us.” Lord have mercy.

“Lord Who permitted Mary Magdalene to tell Your saintly Apostles about Your glorious resurrection and Who allowed Phoebe to

become a deaconess in Your Holy church as You allowed in the past, Lord allow today, (this) or those in Your service, and make us worthy to fulfill this service without falling into condemnation before You, and pour the grace of your Holy Spirit upon them by the grace and compassion

“Lord God Who does not reject women who come forward by the divine will to serve with good intention, and called them Your servants. Grant the grace of Your Holy Spirit to Your maid servants, these who will to give themselves to You, to fulfill Your service, as You granted the grace of this service to Your servant Phoebe, whom You called for work in Your church, so she was a helper to Your servant St. Paul the apostle

Pour on them Your holy gifts, by the grace and compassion ..”

“O eternal Lord, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, look now to Your maid servants, those called for the service of consecration. Give them the Holy Spirit and purify them from all blemish of body and soul, to be worthy to fulfill the work which You give them.”

Glory and worship due to You and Your Only Begotten son and the Holy Spirit forever. Amen.

“O Lord, Holy Almighty God Who sanctified women by the birth of Your Only Son from the Virgin St. Mary, we ask You Lord”.

Lord have mercy.

“You Who granted the grace of the Holy Spirit, not only to men but to women too. Now Lord look unto Your maid-servants, call them to service and pour upon them the gift of Your Holy Spirit. Keep them in the Orthodox Faith to accomplish Your service continually, without blame according to Your joy. Glory, honor and worship are sent to You O Father, Son and Holy Spirit” Lord have mercy.

“O Holy God on high, looking to the humble, You Who chose the strong and weak, and dignified those in humbleness, Lord send the grace of Your Holy Spirit to Your maid-servants empower them by Your righteousness, so that if they act by Your commandments, and serve in the house of Your holiness, they become Yours, vessels gifted for Your glorification. Grant them power O Lord, to act joyfully according to Your teachings that You drew as a rule for their service. Lord give them the Spirit of meekness, power, praise, bearing and patience, so if they carry Your yoke with joy and struggle patiently, they will be granted the crowns of service.”

“Yes O Lord Who knows our weakness, perfect Your maid-servants to serve women, visit the patients and those who do not come to church, serve the poor and needy, help on the Baptismal day of adult women, teach the catechumens, organize women in church, empower them for edification and good example. Sanctify them

and enlighten them. Give them wisdom, as You are blessed and glorified O Father, Son and Holy spirit.” Lord have mercy.

“Lord listen to our prayers and send the blessing of Your Holy Spirit to them, to accomplish Your service without falling into condemnation, and become an example of holy life. Bless them Lord whom You bought by Your Precious Blood” Lord have mercy.

The deacon says: From the Lord we ask

The bishop completes the prayer saying:

+ For the peace of the holy, universal. Apostolic church:- From the Lord we ask. Lord have mercy

+ For the service of women in church, and poor sick and catechumens: from the Lord we ask. Lord have mercy

+ For those coming forward for the service of consecration, commanded from those presenting them, for the Lord to grant them grace and power, bless their service as He blessed Phoebe before: from the Lord we ask

..... Lord have mercy
Lastly make us worthy to say thankfully, Our Father Who art in heaven

+ Then the bishop signs them thrice by the cross (without laying of hands), saying every time:

+ (Name) consecrated for the holy Coptic Orthodox Church of God (khen Evran) then blesses the service garments (signing it

thrice) for them to be clothed.

+ Then the following commandment is said:-

“Blessed daughter know that the Lord chose you for the service of consecration for the Holy Church, keep the commandment. Watch always to be blameless, to keep the consecration garment undefiled. Fill your mouth with praise, be always in the fullness of grace through the Holy Sacraments. Be obedient to your father the bishop and whoever guide you into the way of God. Keep faithfully the dogma and the service to which you are entrusted from the church and may the Lord empower you by His grace, and count you of the wise virgins, the blessed brides of Christ.

+ By the end of the mass they receive the Holy Communion.

Assistant Deaconess

+ The consecrated person may be promoted to an assistant deaconess after at least five years of the date of the Rite of her consecration. Her good manners, obedience, adoration, service and experience are considered with the extent of the efficiency of her work and readiness for the completion of the way of consecration.

+ If her promotion to an assistant deaconess is approved, the following Rite is performed for her:-

Rite of Consecration of and Assistant Deaconess:

+ Consecration prayers are performed after the matins (morning raising of incense in a private mass attended by women only.

+ Those called for consecration read their special undertaking, previously noted, before the door of the tabernacle, bowing their heads humbly. The bishop prays a thanksgiving prayer, then they stand together while he raises the incense, then starts the prayers of consecration as follows:-

O Master, Almighty Lord Wise in His counseling, Powerful in His deeds, Who created man on His image and likeness, created them male and female and blessed them.

We ask and entreat Your goodness O Philanthropic One, to accept and bless Your maid-servants coming forward to You humbly, and make them worthy for the service of consecration for the rank of assistant deaconess to help the deaconess with several services specified for them, to serve You with faithfulness and purity to the last breath.

By the grace, compassion and love of humankind

The attendants repeat: Kerye-leyson thrice.

O God Who gave sonship to Mary the sister of Moses, Deborah and Kalda and Anna daughter

of Phanuel, and poured on them the talents of the Holy Spirit and made them worthy to serve You an acceptable service. Accept Your maid-servants and pour upon them the talents of Your Holy Spirit, to live a life of consecration and community with all love, peace and faithfulness, and help the deaconesses in the women's service. Accept their service as a fragrance of incense before You, as You accepted the service of wise women dedicated for the service of the tabernacle, whom You arose their hearts by wisdom so they waved by their hands and brought blue and purple scarlet yarn and fine linen thread necessary for the tabernacle. *Exodus 25:37* Keep them by Your right hand from the tribulations and traps of Satan, enemy of all righteousness.

By the grace, compassion and love of humankind

The attendants repeat: Kerye-leyson thrice.

O Master Lord Jesus Christ our God Who incarnated from the virgin and holy saint Mary and made her Queen of the heavenly and earthly. You Who accepted the service of the women who followed You, believed in You like Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Jacob and Joses, the mother of Zebedee's sons, Joanna the wife of Chuja, and Susanna and many others who provided for You from their substance. *Matthew 27, Luke 8.*

You Who accepted the service of the spikenard,

that was made by Mary the sister of Lazarus, and You praised her and defended her *John 12.*

You Who accepted the two mites of the poor widow, and praised her as she faithfully gave all that she had, her whole livelihood *Mark 12.*

You Who sent Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to preach Your Sainly apostles by Your Glorious Resurrection.

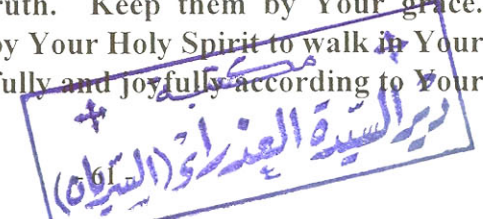
You Who filled the daughters of Philip the preacher by Your Holy Spirit and granted them the grace of sonship and accepted the service of Phoebe, the deaconess of the church of Canchrea, and Tekla the disciple of Your great apostle Paul.

Accept the service of Your maid-servants, grant them the grace of the Holy Spirit, purify them from all blemish of body and soul to accomplish reverently the service that the church gives them.

Keep them in the Orthodox faith to fulfill Your service blamelessly according to the joy of Your goodness as glory and honor are due to You for ever Amen.

The attendants respond: Kerye-leyson thrice.

O Holy God living on high and looking to the humble, look now from the loftiness of Your heaven to Your maid-servants. Empower them by Your truth. Keep them by Your grace. Bless them by Your Holy Spirit to walk in Your service faithfully and joyfully according to Your goodness.



Grant them the spirit of humbleness, chastity, purity, power, endurance, bearing, meekness, to endure joyfully Your holy yoke, and fight patiently in the struggle placed before them. And when they have fought the good fight, finished the race and have kept the faith, finally there is laid up for them the crowns of righteousness that are incorruptible and undefiled and that do not fade away.

By the grace, compassion and love of humankind

The attendants respond: Kerye-leyson thrice.

The bishop signs every one of them thrice without laying of hands, saying (Name) an assistant deaconess in Khen Evran etc., then signs their specific garments thrice too, for them to dress.

+ By the end of the mass they receive the Holy Communion.

THE DEACONESS

+ The assistant deaconess is promoted to deaconess after five years of her consecration as assistant deaconess. This promotion is done according to her good manners, obedience, adoration, progressing experience in service, the efficiency of her work and her readiness to complete the way of consecration to the end, with the commitment for the life of virginity or widowhood to the last breath. The promotion is to the rank of a complete deaconess is decided by the high committee of affairs of consecrated women.

+ If the bishop and the committee of affairs of consecrated women agree to promote her to a deaconess, the following Rite is performed for her:-

A proposed Rite for consecration of deaconess

+ The prayers of consecration are performed after the morning raising of incense (matins) in a private mass attended only by women.

+ Those called for the rank of deaconess read their special undertaking, then stand before the Sanctuary reverently and humbly.

+ The bishop prays a thanksgiving prayer and raises the incense and starts the following prayers from the Apostolic Rules:-

“O Eternal God Father of our Lord and God Jesus Christ, Creator of man and women, Who

filled Mary, Deborah, Anna and Khelda by Your Holy Spirit, and did not disdain that Your Only-Begotten Son Jesus Christ is born of a virgin”.

Now look upon Your servant standing before You, chosen for deaconship. Fill her with Your Holy Spirit. Purify her from every blemish of body and soul.

Honor for You and Your Christ Who is with You, and the Holy Spirit, glory and worship forever Amen¹.

Designed by His Holiness Pope Shenouda III when he consecrated some deaconesses at Pentecost on 14/6/1981.

“O Lord wise in His counseling, Who created man as male and female, created both of them on His own image and likeness and gave them the same blessing and authority over all creatures.”

Lord Who granted sonship to Mary sister of Moses and Aaron, Deborah, Khelda and Anna daughter of Phannuel, and allowed Philip the preacher to have ten virgins who prophesy.

You Who poured Your Holy Spirit upon men and women together and gave the woman spiritual talents like men.

Lord Who allowed to send Mary Magdalene to

¹ A book of deacon's ranks, published by The Angel's church in Toson, Page 63.

preach Your saintly apostles by Your glorious Resurrection and allowed Phoebe to become a deaconess in Your Holy church.

As You allowed in the past Lord, please allow the woman to share in Your service today and make us worthy to accomplish this service without falling into condemnation before You, and pour the grace of Your Holy Spirit upon Your maid-servants. By the grace and compassion

O Lord God Who does not reject women who give themselves - by the approval of the divine will - to serve in Your holy places, but allowed them to be called Your servants. Give the grace of the Holy spirit to Your maid-servants, those who will to give themselves to You to accomplish Your service, as You gave grace of this service to Your servant Phoebe whom You called to work in Your church, so she became a helper to Your servant Paul the apostle.

Pour upon them Your holy talents, by the grace compassion

O eternal Lord Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Creator of man and woman, Who filled Mary, Deborah, Henna and Khelda of the Holy spirit, Who did not disdain for Your Only Begotten Son to be born of a woman. In the tabernacle and the temple You appoint women to guard Your holy doors. Look now upon Your maid-servants, those called for the service of deaconship. Grant them the grace of the Holy

The Rite of the Second Marriage is completed peacefully, and it is used in second marriage if it happens.

Glory be to God forever. Amen.

