



Memo

Date: November 12, 2018
To: Priests and Deacons
From: ✠Wilton D. Gregory, Archbishop of Atlanta
Re: Deacon Baptism Authorization

Recently on several occasions, questions were raised regarding faculties granted to deacons in the Archdiocese of Atlanta for the Sacrament of Baptism during Mass.

- Deacons have the faculty to baptize children up to the age of seven only, unless specific permission is granted by the Archbishop and delegation from the Pastor of the parish where the baptism occurs.
- Deacons are authorized, when invited, to celebrate a Baptism during Mass provided they have permission from the Pastor.

Please see the complete list of faculties granted to all deacons with parish assignments in the Archdiocese of Atlanta.



**FACULTIES GRANTED TO PERMANENT DEACONS
ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA**

Pastoral Faculty 1

To preach the word of God everywhere, including the homily at the Sacred Liturgy

Pastoral Faculty 2

To baptize infants up to the age of reason (seven years). To baptize children and adults over the age of reason when there is grave danger of death.

Pastoral Faculty 3

To dispense the faithful in *individual* cases from the Eucharist fast for a just reason.

Pastoral Faculty 4

To assist at all marriages within the respective boundaries of a parish to which one has been assigned for diaconal ministry provided one of the parties is a member of the Latin church.

Pastoral Faculty 5

To witness the marriage of a catechumen with another catechumen or with another non-Catholic, whether baptized or not, in a sacred place within the Archdiocese of Atlanta, when properly delegated by the local pastor if outside your parish of assignment.

Pastoral Faculty 6

When the local ordinary cannot be reached, to dispense those in danger of death from canonical form and all impediments solely of ecclesiastical law except that of priesthood.

Pastoral Faculty 7

Deacons with an appointment to a parish are granted the faculty to dispense from all ecclesiastical impediments with the exception of those noted herein whenever everything has been prepared for the marriage or the convalidation thereof and the delay to obtain the dispensation from competent authority would most likely cause serious harm.

Pastoral Faculty 8

To waive the publication of the matrimonial bans whenever you consider it inappropriate or unnecessary to publish them (C.1067).

Pastoral Faculty 9

When distributing Holy Communion outside of mass, to request the assistance of a duly designated Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion when a large number of the faithful makes this necessary.

Pastoral Faculty 10

A deacon can impart only those blessings which are expressly permitted to him by law. (C. 1169,3)

Pastoral Faculty 11

To permit lay persons who have been properly instructed to administer the following sacramentals in accord with the norms of the liturgical books: The distribution of blessed ashes on Ash Wednesday and the blessing of throats on the memorial of Saint Blaise. (By virtue of ordination deacons may impart blessings). (C.1168)

Pastoral Faculty 12

The Archbishop has given prior authorization, as needed, for the following ecumenical and interfaith practices or activities within the Archdiocese of Atlanta with certain stated exception.

Regarding Marriage

- A. Whenever a dispensation from canonical form has been granted, a Catholic deacon approved for ministry within the Archdiocese of Atlanta may attend or participate in some way in the celebration of an ecumenical or interfaith marriage at the invitation of the non-Catholic officiant. With due regard to the principle of reciprocity, he may offer appropriate prayers, read from Sacred Scripture, give a brief exhortation and bless the couple. However, it is forbidden to have a religious celebration in which a Catholic and non-Catholic minister, assisting together but following their respective rituals, ask for the consent of the parties. It is also forbidden for a Catholic cleric to receive consent of the couple in a non-Catholic ceremony or ritual.
- B. At the request of the couple, the Catholic deacon may invite the clergyperson of the non-Catholic party to participate in a marriage celebrated according to the Catholic ritual with due regard to the principle of reciprocity. The clergyperson may give a brief exhortation (but not preach the homily) and bless the couple. In addition, an Eastern non-Catholic clergyman may read a lesson from Sacred Scripture even during Mass if allowed by his own discipline. Outside of Mass a baptized clergyperson may also read a lesson.
- C. The celebration of marriage between a Catholic and baptized non-Catholic may take place at Mass for a just reason (e.g., the couple requests it and circumstances justify it). The preferred celebration for ecumenical marriages is outside of Mass because of problems dealing with Eucharistic sharing. Moreover, an interfaith celebration of marriage between a Catholic and non-baptized person must take place outside of Mass. In all cases the norms on Eucharistic sharing are to be observed. It should be noted that deacons are not allowed to be the Church witness of of an Eastern Church *sui iuris*.
- D. Members of Eastern non-Catholic Churches (e.g., the Orthodox) may be invited to assume the role of reader at Catholic marriage celebrations even during Mass; whereas baptized members of other Churches or ecclesial Communities may assume the role of reader only outside of Mass.
- E. Except for members of Eastern non-Catholic Churches, to assume the role of reader at a Eucharistic Sacrifice requires individual authorization from the *Archbishop* with a just cause in an exceptional circumstance.
- F. Generally, participation by Catholics as principal witnesses or wedding attendants at valid marriages between non-Catholics is allowed, as is the same participation by non-Catholics at marriages of Catholics. However, any discipline of an Eastern non-Catholic Church to the contrary in this matter should be respected.

Regarding Baptism

- G. For a just cause the minister of baptism may admit a suitable member of an orthodox/Eastern non-Catholic Church as a godparent together with a Catholic godparent at the baptism of a Catholic infant or adult as long as provision has been made for Catholic upbringing. (CCEO, C. 685-§3)
- H. The minister of baptism may admit a validity baptized member of another ecclesial Community as a Christian witness (not a godparent) together with a Catholic godparent, irrespective of gender, at the baptism of a Catholic infant or adult with due regard to the principle of reciprocity. (C.874-§2)

Regarding Sacramental Life, especially the Eucharist

- I. At Catholic sacramental rites outside of Mass pastors may invite baptized members of other Churches and ecclesiastical Communities to preach. If a homily is prescribed (e.g., at the rite of marriage), it is reserved to a Catholic priest or deacon. Authorized preaching in addition to a prescribed homily may be appropriate in certain circumstances (e.g., at weddings). [Confer also Faculty 10-D, E above for norms regarding readers at such rites outside of Mass.]
- J. **In danger of death** Catholic deacons may lawfully administer the sacrament of the Eucharist to baptized Christians of other Churches or ecclesial Communities under the following conditions: (a) the person is unable to have recourse to the sacrament from one's own minister or priest; (b) the person must request the sacrament on his/her own initiative; (c) the person must be properly disposed; (d) the person must manifest Catholic faith in the sacrament. For the Eucharist it is required at the least that the individual personally affirm that the bread and wine actually change into the Body and Blood of Christ at the words of the Consecration at Mass.

[Catholic priests, even one who has lost the clerical state (whether married or not), may lawfully administer the sacrament of Penance under the same conditions to baptized non-Catholics. Regarding the sacrament of anointing the Sick a Catholic priest (who has **not** lost the clerical state or who has not attempted marriage) may lawfully administer it under the same conditions to baptized non-Catholics. Therefore, if feasible, an authorized priest should be notified to administer the other two sacraments according to the norm of law.] (CC 844-§4 and 976; CCEO, CC. 671-§4 and 725; *codcom*, interpretation, 19 May 1997)

- K. **Outside of danger of death** Catholic deacons may lawfully administer the sacrament of the Eucharist to members of Eastern non-Catholic Churches and to members of the *Polish National Church* (in the USA) *provided they request this* sacrament at their own initiative and are properly disposed. (C. 844-§3; CCEO, C. 671-§3; Reply from the *Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity*, 29 March 1993; *Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs*, 13 March 1996).
- L. **Outside of danger of death** Catholic deacons may lawfully administer the sacrament of the Eucharist to baptized Christians of other ecclesial Communities in the case of **a grave**

and pressing need AND with the prior consent of the Archbishop AND under the same conditions noted in J above. No form of general authorization has been granted by the Archbishop in this matter. Each and every case must be referred to him on an individual basis (especially with regard to reception of the Eucharist at weddings or funerals.) (C.844§4; CCEO, C. 671-§4)

Regarding non-Sacramental Liturgical Rites

- M. In non-sacramental liturgical celebrations taking place in other Churches or ecclesial Communities, Catholic clergy or laity if invited by their hosts may read a lesson or preach with due regard to the principle of reciprocity.
- N. In non-sacramental liturgical celebrations taking place in a Catholic setting, clergy of other Churches and ecclesial Communities may be given liturgical honors proper to their rank and be invited to read a lesson or preach with due regard to the principles of reciprocity.
- O. Blessings usually imparted to Catholics may also be given to catechumens and non-Catholics who request them according to the nature and object of the blessing unless there is an express prohibition. (C. 1170; Book of Blessings, 1989, n. 31)

Regarding Liturgical Sharing

- P. On a particular occasion whenever the clergy of other Christians Churches or ecclesial Communities lack a place necessary for the celebration of their religious rites (e.g., a funeral), the parish pastor or chaplain may allow the use of a Catholic church or building with due regard to the principle of reciprocity. In such a case the Blessed Sacrament, if reserved, is to be moved to some other suitable place for temporary reservation. Any such liturgical use by non-Christians clergy or community or habitual use of a Catholic facility by non-Catholics requires the express consent of the Archbishop.

Regarding Christian Burial

- Q. Catholic clergy may celebrate the Rite of Christian Burial for an unbaptized infant if a parent had intended to provide for Catholic baptism before the infant's death. (C.1183-§ 3)
- R. With due regard to the norm of Canon 1184, a Catholic deacon may celebrate the Rite of Christian Burial, except at Mass, for a baptized non-Catholic who did desire or at least with a reasonable presumption would have preferred Catholic burial services. Such a decision would be appropriate if the deceased person had worshiped regularly at a Catholic church or identified with Catholicism more than any other faith expression. In the Eucharistic prayer the name of the deceased is to be omitted. Burial in a Catholic cemetery is permitted. The norms on Eucharistic sharing are to be observed, as noted in Faculty **10, K and L.** (C. 1183-§3)
- S. With due regard to norm of Canon 1184, Catholic clergy may celebrate the Rite of Christian Burial, but without Mass, for a baptized non-Catholic whose priest or minister is

unavailable provided such an arrangement would not be contrary to the will of the deceased. Burial in a Catholic cemetery is permitted. (C. 1183-§ 3)

- T. At the request of a family member or the funeral director (if appropriate), Catholic clergy may conduct Para liturgical funeral or burials services for deceased non-Catholics whenever the conditions noted in sections **Q,R, or S** (above) have not been verified. Such funeral services generally take place at a funeral chapel or similar site. The use of a Catholic edifice in such a case requires the express consent of the Archbishop or his Vicar.

- U. **Non-Catholic burial rites** for a deceased member of a Christian Church or other ecclesial Community may be conducted in a Catholic cemetery on the occasion of an interment, which is also permitted whenever the deceased is to be buried in a family plot where a Catholic has been or will be buried. Except as noted above (Faculty 10, R and S), other requests for the use of a Catholic cemetery by non-Catholic clergy or laity are to be referred to the Archbishop.