

DEPARTMENT OF THE PERMANENT DIACONATE

Policy Regarding Attire for Permanent Deacons

January 28, 2006

To the Clergy and Religious of the Diocese of Beaumont

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

With the ordination of a new class of permanent deacons scheduled for next month, I wish to advise you of my policy regarding attire for permanent deacons. This policy is normative and abrogates previous policies or guidelines.

The *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons*, published by the U.S.C.C.B. in February 2005, provides that "permanent deacons should resemble the lay faithful in dress and matters of lifestyle," adding that diocesan bishops are to determine any exceptions. Thus, the permanent deacon does not ordinarily wear clerical attire, i.e., Roman collar in a Rabat or with a clergy shirt.

I have determined the following exceptions:

1. The collar must be worn when ministering in Criminal Justice settings;
2. The collar is to be worn whenever celebrating Sunday Liturgy in the Absence of a Priest, or offering a Communion Service on Sundays and Holy Days (in addition to the alb and stole).
3. The collar may be worn for a Wake Service – Rosary, Graveside Service, Baptismal celebration and preaching when (a) the alb and stole are not used, and (b) the pastoral situation suggests that the permanent deacon be clearly identified as Catholic clergy. (Consultation with the pastor or a priest could be helpful in making such a determination for (b).)

When the collar is worn, the remainder of clothing (coat, pants, belt, shoes) should be conservative in style and color. A clergy shirt should be black, gray or white when used by a permanent deacon.

Also, whenever offering ministry in layman's attire or with a Roman collar, the deacon's identification badge should be worn. The badge is not worn with the alb.

Finally, recall that the most powerful witness we offer to others is our living the life of Christ the Servant.

Most Reverend Curtis J. Guillory, S.V.D., D.D.
Bishop of Beaumont