

## **Change of Status for Deacons - from Active to Senior Status**

Though the Christian's call to ministry is a lifetime vocation permanently imprinting the character of those adopting the Sacrament of Holy Orders, the demands of ministry on an aging deacon's physical, mental, and emotional capacities can become burdensome. And because it is apparent that the diminishment accompanying aging varies greatly from person to person, this policy is not intended to imply that a change of status from active to senior means a deacon is incapable of serving in the ministry or unable to exercise the faculties granted at ordination. Rather, the purpose is to facilitate the senior deacon's ministerial service according to his willingness, ability, and choice, in consultation with the Archbishop of Hartford.

- a. Consistent with the archdiocesan retirement policy for its priests, the mandatory retirement age for a deacon is seventy-five (75) years of age. Before his seventy-fifth birthday, the deacon will receive a letter from the Archbishop and the Assistant to the Vicar for Clergy for the Permanent Diaconate informing him that he will automatically change status from active to senior on his seventy-fifth birthday. The deacon need not submit a letter to the Archbishop seeking the change of status.
- b. In exceptional circumstances, the senior deacon may request an extension of his assignment. After consultation, the Archbishop will decide whether to extend the deacon's assignment or accept the change of status.
- c. Extensions are granted for one year at a time. Each successive year after age seventy-five, the senior deacon must send a letter to the Archbishop requesting an extension.
- d. Upon the Archbishop's approval of change of status, the deacon, as with all priests, will not be assigned to a specific parish but will retain his diaconal faculties in the archdiocese. He is then free to exercise his diaconal ministry with the agreement of the pastor of any parish. This means that deacons in senior status will not receive the \$300 monthly salary, but rather are free to receive a stipend commensurate with the ministry being performed.
- e. Deacons between the ages of 70 and 75 may request senior status for serious reasons. However, the sole desire not to accept an assignment to a particular parish or ministry would not be considered a serious reason.
- f. **Faculties:** If it is clear that the senior deacon cannot function properly, all faculties may be withdrawn. Even in the case of illness, the Archbishop must make the determination and officially remove the senior deacon's faculties, informing the deacon of the reason for such action. However, the Archbishop, in consultation with the Assistant to the Vicar for Clergy for the Permanent Diaconate, and with good reasons, may also remove only certain faculties from a senior deacon, depending upon the capabilities of the individual deacon.

A senior deacon is encouraged to remain active in all functions of the Diaconal Community.