

*Instructions for Deacons Serving in the Diocese of Los Angeles issued by His Grace Bishop Serapion at the August 2014 Clergy Meeting at St. Mary Church in Victorville.*

## BLESSING AND WEARING THE STICHARION (ALB OR *TUNYA*)

### When Should the Tunyas be Blessed?

The *tunya* should be blessed before the Morning Raising of Incense. When the priest consecrates the vestments, the deacon should not cross himself, the priest will be the only one who consecrates the vestments.

If a deacon comes late, the next acceptable times to bless the tunyas are as follows:

- Before the prayers of the Agpeya
- After the prayers of the Agpeya
- Before the Absolution of the Servants

### Where Should the Tunyas be Blessed?

His Grace prefers that he and the clergy put on their service garments in a room in the church entrance before they enter the church sanctuary.

### What Kind of Tunyas are Permitted?

There should not be pictures of saints on the tonias – only a cross on the front or back.

## LIGHTING AND HOLDING THE CANDLES INSIDE THE ALTAR DURING THE “ANAPHORA”

Candles should not be lit while kneeling; therefore, candles should be lit as follows:

- At the beginning of the “sanctification prayers” (Institution) until the deacon responds, “Worship God in fear and trembling”.
- At the beginning of the “Fraction” prayer until its end. Candles should not be lit before the fraction, e. g. when the priest prays saying: “the Holy Body” (for we should be kneeling down).
- When the priest prays, saying, “The Holies for the holy” until the beginning of the Confession “Amen, Amen, Amen. I believe, I believe, I believe”.
- During the Confession all deacons should kneel down except for the deacon who prays the “Confession”. This deacon stands across the altar facing the priest holding the cross in his right hand, a candle in his left hand and a Corporal (lefafa) in between.
- Do not extinguish the candles by blowing them out (especially after receiving Holy Communion).
- When the priest points to the bread or the chalice, the deacon who is holding a candle at this time should not point his candle toward the bread or the chalice. Candles are for veneration, not for pointing.

## CONDUCT DURING THE DIVINE SERVICES

- The deacons who serve in the sanctuary must use the Diocese Liturgy Book. (Arabic, English, and Copt)
- During the encircling of the incense inside the sanctuary, the deacon carries only the cross (not the Gospel) while he is saying inaudibly the response of the three litanies.

## Deacons’ Responses in the Holy Altar

- The responses of the deacons should be prayed by taking turns so everyone learns what to say. Don’t use your hands to get the attention of other deacons or talk to them. Don’t instruct other deacons during the liturgy; wait until afterwards.

- There will be no motions or talking in or out of the sanctuary. The deacons closest to the censer will take care of it so that deacons on the other side will not have to jump up and cross over to it.
- The deacons who serve in the sanctuary have their own responses; and also the congregation have their own. The deacons who serve inside the sanctuary should not participate in what the congregation are saying. Their focus should be on the Holy Sacrifice of the Liturgy or receiving the Holy Mystery. And also, the deacons outside the sanctuary should not repeat the response of the deacons who are serving inside the sanctuary.

## Entering the Holy Altar

- The deacons should not enter the sanctuary using the royal door. The deacons enter the side door to receive Holy Communion except for the deacons who are serving inside the sanctuary (the one who is carrying the flask of water and the flask of wine.)
- You should enter the sanctuary with your right foot on your right side, and exit with the left foot from the left side facing the sanctuary.
- Do not pass through the front of the sanctuary.

## Receiving Holy Communion

- The deacon who prays the “Confession” should take Communion immediately after the priests, then he stands at the main entrance of the Altar (The Royal Door), facing the Altar. After all of the deacons receive communion, he then walks (backwards) in front of the priest so that he is facing the “Holy Body.”
- The deacon should not prostrate after receiving the Holy Communion. (for the second time).
- The Response of “Amen” while Receiving Communion: As the priest gives Communion he says “The Body of Emmanuel our God.” The person receiving the Communion (not the deacon standing by the priest) should reply saying, “Amen”.
- Chanting the distribution hymns outside the altar is no excuse for delaying to receive the “Holy Communion”.

# Communing a Sick Person

- Outside of the Altar If the priest must go to a sick person outside the Altar, a deacon, carrying a candle, must escort him.
- The deacon who prayed the “Confession” should remain guarding the “Holy Body” and carrying the cross, the candle, and the corporal in between.

*From the Diocese of Los Angeles, Southern CA, and Hawaii*