

## **The Meaning and Function of the Diaconate Diocese of Northwest Texas**

*The following description of the meaning and function of the Diaconate presents our Diocese's vision of the renewed Diaconate. It has been approved by Bishop Ohl and the Commission on Ministry. It is our intention for this vision to be definitive. It will drive the recruitment, selection, training, oversight, and Continuing Education of Deacons in our Diocese.*

Deacons exist to call the whole community into its servant ministry. They are prophetic leaders who are called to challenge the Church to always look beyond herself.

Applicants to the Diaconate need to have the character of a servant, and this character should be visible in the applicant's life and ministry. Ordination to the Diaconate is not a way to recognize or validate existing ministries, but a means of forming living icons who illuminate Christ as the model of servanthood to all the baptized. Deacons are not ordained to do the outreach ministry for the Church, but to lead others into servant ministry in the world.

Deacons are under the authority of the bishop and of the supervising Priest under whom they work. The liturgical functions of a Deacon are not their primary ministry, but are symbolic and expressive of their central ministry:

- Serving all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely
- Interpreting to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world.

Deacons will be leaders who have a visible ministry to the dispossessed, are willing to undertake the role of prophet, and will strengthen the servant ministry of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Northwest Texas.

Lent, 1998

Revised May, 2000