

# CANON XIII

## Deaconesses

### 1. Recognition

- a) Women of devout character and approved fitness may be set apart by the bishop of any diocese for the work of a deaconess, according to such forms as shall be authorized by the House of Bishops, and no woman shall be recognized as a deaconess until she has been so set apart. The office of the deaconess shall be recognized as a ministry to which women may be called which involves dedication to life-long service.
- b) A deaconess, duly set apart in another branch of the Anglican Communion, may be recognized and licensed by any bishop in Canada.
- c) Before the service for the ordering of deaconesses the candidate shall be required to take suitable oaths of subscription which will express her willingness to obey her Ordinary and the Canons of the diocese to which she is licensed.

### 2. Qualifications

- a) No woman shall be set apart for the work of a deaconess unless:
  - i) she be 25 years of age, provided that the bishop for special reasons may admit a candidate at an earlier age,
  - ii) in no case less than 23 years;
  - iii) she is a communicant in good standing in the Church, and
  - iv) she produces to the bishop testimonials signed by two priests of the Church and by three lay communicants, of whom one shall be a man and two women, that she possesses such characteristics as, in the judgment of the persons testifying, fit her for some of the branches of duty defined in section 3 hereof.
- b) The bishop shall be satisfied, by examination or otherwise, that the applicant has had adequate training at a recognized training school followed by at least one year of practical experience.

### 3. Duties

- a) It belongs to the office of the deaconess, in the place where she is licensed to serve, to exercise a pastoral care over women, young people, and children, to visit the sick and the whole, to perform other social functions, to instruct the people in the faith, and to assist in their preparation for baptism and confirmation.
- b) At the request of the incumbent, a bishop may permit a deaconess in any congregation within the bishop's jurisdiction:
  - i) to read the services of Morning and Evening Prayer and the Litany, except those portions reserved for the priest;

- ii) to instruct and to preach, and
- iii) in the absence of a priest or deacon, to officiate at Public Baptism, at the Thanksgiving after Childbirth and at the Burial of the Dead.

#### **4. Episcopal Oversight and Authority**

- a) No deaconess shall accept work in a diocese without the written authority or license of the bishop of that diocese; nor shall she undertake parish work except at the request of the incumbent of the parish or mission.
- b) Before issuing a written authority or license for such deaconess to work within a diocese, the bishop of such diocese shall see that provision is made for a pension for such deaconess on a contributory basis requiring the society or parish employing such deaconess to remit such contributions to the General Synod Pension Fund during the period of her service.
- c) When not under the jurisdiction of an incumbent, a deaconess shall be under the direct oversight of the bishop of the diocese in which she is canonically resident.

#### **5. Transfer and Resignation**

- a) The transfer of a deaconess from one diocese to another shall be by letter from the bishop.
- b) A deaconess may voluntarily relinquish the exercise of her office as a deaconess in the Church, by resignation to the ecclesiastical authority of the diocese in which she is a canonical resident. She shall not be suspended or removed from office, except by the bishop, for cause.