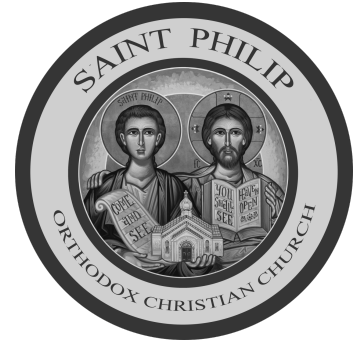


Preparing for Ordination as a Subdeacon

*Blessed is he whom You choose and help; he shall dwell in Your courts.
We shall be filled with the good things of Your house; Holy is Your temple,
wondrous in righteousness. - Psalm 64:5*



The Subdeacon is a server in the altar, “overseers and keepers of Thy holy vessels.”¹ The Subdeacons maintain the right care and order of the altar and liturgical supplies, as well as administering the ranks of altar boys under the direction of the priests and deacons. Subdeacons may also assist the bishop in a variety of tasks, both within the services and in general administration as needed.

For many, the Subdeacon is a preparatory role for becoming a Deacon, and as such it is important to learn what the deacon and priest(s) are doing in the altar. Not just for anticipating needs, but to learn yourself if/when the time comes for you to be ordained.

Preparation

- With your Pastor’s and Bishop’s blessing, work with your pastor, spiritual father, an experienced Subdeacon, and other clergy.
- Learn about the office: historically, theologically, and practically.
- Order a set of Sub-deacon or Deacon’s vestments in coordination with your pastor; learn the meaning of the vestments, how to care for it, and when to wear it.
- Review the ordination service; study & pray through it weekly (Antiochian service below), and annually on the anniversary of your ordination.
- Make the necessary arrangements for family and guests to be in attendance.
- Make a pilgrimage (at least overnight) to a monastery.
- Anticipate challenges and temptations as you prepare for ordination. Satan resists those who seek to serve in the temple of God.

Resources:

Article on the Subdeaconiate
<https://goodguyswearblack.org/holy-orders/minor-orders/subdeacon/>

Guide to Readers and Subdeacons
<https://www.st-philip.net/files/Resources/Guide-to-Readers-and-Subdeacons.pdf>

Services without a Priest -
<http://www.dowama.org/content/services-without-priest>

Shortly Before

- About 6 weeks in advance, remind your pastor to remind the Bishop and finalize details.
- Confess your sins the week prior to tonsuring.
- Fast and pray carefully the night and morning before your ordination.
- Arrange photographer and accommodate seating for your family and guests.

Ongoing

- Pray...serving is not a substitute for a prayer rule. The more we serve the more we need to pray
- Continue to study the services, learning the more subtle details of the rubrics
- Be attentive to the calendar of services and learn to anticipate the needs for set up for services
- Arrive on time on Sunday mornings to assist with proskomedia and the preparation of the altar for Orthros and the Divine Liturgy, as directed by your pastor. Be the last to leave the altar!
- Be eager to serve, teachable in spirit, and humble in heart.
- Always get the pastor’s blessing when you see him and ask (or anticipate) how you can help.

¹ Sec. III. - Ordination and Duties of the Clergy, Book VIII. Concerning Gifts, and Ordinations, and the Ecclesiastical Canons, *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* (ANF07. Fathers of the Third and Fourth Centuries) pp. 492-4

The Ordaining of a Subdeacon²

If the Candidate is to receive the Laying-on of hands to the Sub-Diaconate (see page 79) on the same day, after he hath been invested with the tunic, the Sub-Deacons bring the dalmatic and the dalmatic-girdle (that is the stole) to the Bishop. And when the Bishop hath signed the girdle with the cross, and he who is to receive ordination hath kissed it, and the hand of the Bishop, they gird him therewith. And the Bishop signeth him with his hand, in the form of a cross; after which the Archpriest saith:

Let us pray to the Lord.

And the Bishop laying his hand on the Candidate's head, reciteth the following Prayer:

O Lord our God, who, through one and the same Holy Spirit distributing gifts of grace to each one of those whom thou has chosen, hast given to thy Church divers Orders; who, through thine inscrutable providence hast appointed degrees of ministry therein, for the service of thy holy, spotless Mysteries; and who, through thine ineffable foreknowledge, hast ordained this thy servant to be worthy to serve in thy Holy Church: Do thou, this same Lord, preserve him uncondemned in all things. And grant that he may love the beauty of thy house, stand before the doors of thy holy Temple, and kindle the lamps in the tabernacle of thy glory. And plant him in thy holy Church like a fruitful olive-tree, which bringeth forth the fruits of righteousness. And make him thy perfect servant in the time of thine advent, that he may receive the recompense of those who are well-pleasing in thy sight. For thine are the kingdom and the power and the glory, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now, and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

And after the Prayer, the Sub-Deacons give the ewer and basin to him who is to receive the Laying-on of hands, and lay a towel on his shoulders. And the Bishop washeth his hands. And he who is to be ordained Sub-Deacon poureth water over the hands of the Bishop. Then he and the Sub-Deacons kiss the hand of the Bishop and depart to their appointed place. And he who is to be ordained Sub-Deacon standeth, holding the ewer and basin, with the towel, unto the Cherubimic Hymn. And he saith secretly:

O Holy God, Holy Mighty, ... (*Thrice*). Glory...now, and ever, ... O all-holy Trinity, ... Lord, have mercy. (*Thrice*). Our Father, who art in heaven, ... For thine is the kingdom, ... Lord, have mercy. (*Thrice*) I believe in one God, ... Pardon, remit, forgive, O God, our transgressions, both voluntary and involuntary, whether in word or deed, whether of knowledge or of ignorance, whether of the day or of the night, whether of the mind or of the intentions: forgive us all, forasmuch as thou art good and lovest mankind.

Secretly

And if he desireth to say anything further, he doth so secretly.

At the time of the Cherubimic Hymn, he is led in front of the Holy Doors, to the Bishop: and the Bishop washeth his hands, according to the rite, and saith the Prayer. Then he signeth the water with his hand, in the form of a cross, thrice. And the Bishop, with this holy water, wetteth his eyes and ears, nostrils, and lips. And at the Great Entrance, the Candidate for Holy Orders walketh behind all the clergy. Then the Bishop saith:

And may the mercy of the great God, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, be with you all. (See Liturgy, page 79.)

And after the Exclamation he is led into the Sanctuary by the Sub-Deacons, according to the rubric, and having received the Bishop's blessing, he taketh his stand with the Sub-Deacons. (2)

² Hapgood, Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church, pp. 309-10