

Diocesan Commission for Permanent Diaconate of Hong Kong
Annual Report 2009

The Commission

Cardinal John Baptist Wu appointed on 1 February 1996 a Diocesan Commission to promote and establish the ministry of Permanent Diaconate in Hong Kong.

Mission

2. - to be responsible for the planning, promotion, publicity, selection of candidates, formation and ordination
- to strengthen the acceptance of permanent diaconate in the Diocese and formation

Appointments

3. Cardinal Joseph Zen appointed/reappointed on 3 December 2007 the following persons to be members of the Commission for the period from 1 February 2008 to 31 January 2010:

Chairman: Fr. Dominic Chan, Vicar General

Members : Fr. Thomas Peyton, M.M., Fr. Ephraim Lam, Fr. Paul Kim Dong Ju, KMS, Fr. Benedict Lam, Permanent Deacon Joseph Sung, Mr. Bernard Chan, Mr. Simon Li, Ms. Louise Wong, Ms. Jennie Chor, Ms Susanna Cheung, Ms. Cecilia Ng

Meetings

4. During the year 2009, 4 meetings were held on 9 January, 21 April, 3 July and 23 October respectively.

Highlights

5. The highlights were focused on the strengthening of the spiritual formation, expanding the learning spectrum, promoting continual learning, and exploring the formation needs of Permanent Deacons and their wives. Details are further elaborated in paragraphs 11 to 17.

Report of the Formation Director

6. The Chairman of the Commission, Fr. Dominic Chan, VG is also appointed to be the Formation Director. The Formation Director is responsible for the

execution of the directives of the Commission regarding the planning, publicity, promotion, selection and ordination arrangements. At present, there are 11 Permanent Deacons in the Hong Kong Diocese. 8 candidates are under training on religious studies, pastoral and community services. For the better understanding and familiarization of the diocesan mechanism, Permanent Deacons and the Candidates as well, are appointed to the appropriate Diocesan committees or organizations as members as detailed in Appendix I. Candidate Peter Ho is now taking a course on Marriage and Family at Pontifical College, Melbourne, Australia. During the study period, arrangements have been made with the Melbourne Arch Diocese for Mr. Ho to practice pastoral services in local Chinese communities.

7. Ordination – Mr. Francis Cheung, Mr. Francis Fung and Mr. Peter Leung were ordained on 11 July 2009 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, officiated by Bishop John Tong.

8. The Commission has prepared a Handbook for the Deacons, Candidates and Aspirants for them to understand their ministries; in addition, the Commission also prepares pastoral guidelines for the Deacons and Candidates to follow in their training and attachment sessions. The Commission has published a prayer sheet for the intention to pray for the Permanent Diaconate ministry in gatherings and promotional activities. A copy is shown at Appendix II.

9. The Formation Director meets with the Permanent Deacons, Candidates and Aspirants regularly to understand their performances and aspirations, for the planning of their training needs, to give guidance and support, and to pay special attention to their spiritual growth, their prayer life and family harmonious relationship. The Formation Director also arranges for the Deacons and Candidates their spiritual directors and mentors in the role of pilot to accompany and support them to grow in their spiritual lives.

10. The Formation Director has included in the Vicar General's website (vgoffice.catholic.org.hk) a linkage to Permanent Deacons to establish information and the promotion of the ministry.

Highlights

Formation Needs for the wives of Permanent Deacons

11. The Commission has taken follow up action on the formation needs of the wives of Permanent Deacons. Ms. Louise Wong, Committee Member had on 28 June 2009 conducted a seminar for the wives of the Permanent Deacons and the candidates explaining the Permanent Deacon ministry, their vocation and the ordained ministry; to help them prepare themselves to take up their future mission, i.e. to accompany and support their husbands in carrying out the ministries entrusted to them by the Church with the spirit of joy and wisdom; to help them maintain harmonious equilibrium in family, in work and church responsibilities. There was also a session for the wives to share experience on mutual support.

Married Couples Spiritual Formation

12. Fr. Benedict Lam has organized with the help of Deacon/Candidate families “family spiritual camps” in 2007 and 2008. This formation programme is aimed at promoting and sharing prayer life in families, to deepen their relationship with the Lord. The experience gained will form the basis for the development of family spirituality formation. Permanent Deacons because of their family background can best respond to the diocesan pastoral priorities in the promotion of married couples spiritual formation. It is proposed that the deacon community can organize regular retreats for married couples on spiritual formation and reflections, to promote family spiritual activities at the deanery/parish level. The contents will include: study of the findings and recommendations of the Diocesan Synod regarding Marriage and Family Pastoral Care, the Christian value on marriage, the theology of the body, the family church, family prayers..... This proposal is being submitted to the deacon community, the Diocesan Pastoral Commission for Marriage and the Family and the Diocesan Pastoral Council for discussion and views collected will be taken into consideration to work out plans for implementation.

Pastoral work at schools

13. The Commission considered that Permanent Deacons because of their rich-learned knowledge on religion, liturgies, can help schools promote pastoral activities, strengthen the religious atmosphere, conduct spiritual counseling for teachers and students, to support the school pastoral workers and the Catholic

teachers, to join as managers in school management. An ad hoc working group has been formed to work out practical and viable ways for implementation.

Permanent Deacons’ formation and continued learning

Target learning

14. The Commission arranges in the Permanent Deacons’ monthly gathering a session for specific topic learning, experience sharing, to study the “Deacon’s Handbook”, the “Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons and Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons” to expand their knowledge and vision:

18 January	Deacon Edwin Ng’s sharing on practicing pastoral ministries with humility and service through charities
15 February	Mr. Nicholas Ng to brief on the work of the Diocesan Commission for the Health Care of the Clergy and Religious
22 March	Sister Louise Lam from the Diocesan Vocations Commission to give a sharing on the parents’ response to vocation of their children and how to help parents promote responding vocation of their children
26 April	Fr. Lawrence Lee, the Diocesan Chancellor to explain the legal aspects of the sacrament of anointment of the sick, the Jesus Christ Latter Day Disciples Church and the Neo New Movements
24 May	Dr. M.K. Shum to brief on the palliatory care to the terminal sick with spiritual support and dignity
28 June	Sharing on vocation and prayer session for the 3 candidates to be ordained in July

26 July	Sharing from the newly ordained Permanent Deacons and their wives
27 September	To view the documentary video "Fountain of Love and Life" produced by the Canadian Diocese to promote Permanent Deacons
25 October	To study the Deacons' Handbook
22 November	To study "Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons and Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons" on the chapter on Ordained Ministry

Annual Retreat

15. The annual retreat was held on 14 to 16 July 2009 at the St. Paul Retreat House, Sheung Shui for the Deacons, Candidates and their wives. The Retreat Master was Fr. Michele Camastra, PIME. The theme was "Servant of the Lord"

Continued Training

16. The Commission arranges short term courses for deacons and candidates to strengthen their understanding on liturgies and pastoral experience with a view to helping them in performing their liturgical ministries: with the support from Fr. Thomas Law, a total of 15 sessions were organized between 16 February to 22 June. The contents include: *Entrance, Liturgy of the Word, Holy Eucharist, Blessing and Dismissal, Distribution of Holy Communion to the sick, Adult and infant baptism, formation of god-parents, pre marriage enquires, matrimonial services, Benediction, funeral services and blessing of the house.*

Familiarization Visits

17. The Commission arranged for the Deacons and Candidates familiarization visits to diocesan organizations for a better understanding of their work. In 2009, 6 visits were organized.

18 February	Diocesan Audio –Visual Centre
11 March	Diocesan Catechetical Centre
22 April	Diocesan Pastoral Centre for the Disabled
29 April	Catholic Marriage Advisory Council
23 September	Religious and Moral Education Curriculum Centre
2 December	Caritas Lok Kan School

Promotion

18. All Deacons and Candidates will personally approach potential Catholics to become aware of the vocation of the Permanent Diaconate ministry. Arrangements have been made with the Holy Spirit Seminary for the promotion activity to the students of religious studies in the commencement of the school term.

The Deacons' Corner

19. For the development of the solidarity of the Deacons, the Diocese has allocated two classrooms at the St. Jude's Primary School at North Point for use by Deacons in organizing gatherings and training purposes. The accommodation is called "The Deacons' Corner". Deacons, Candidates, Aspirants, Applicants and their families will meet in the afternoon of the 4th Sunday of each month to practice Lectio Divina, experience sharing, Vesper practices. Regular gatherings are also held as leisure hours to share fun and laughter.

20. Permanent Deacons take part in the diocesan activities organized for the religious in the study days, celebrations and to conduct Benediction during the monthly gathering of the clergy. Deacons also conduct the prayer services at the Catholic cemeteries on the Chinese festivals remembering the departed with the help of the parish bereavement groups.

21. The Hong Kong Deacons community maintains close contacts with other overseas Chinese Permanent Deacons through the electronic network for experience and information sharing. The activities and information of the Deacons are contained in the website :<http://deacon.catholic.org.hk>

Review and Forward

22. The work of the Commission has been in progress as planned. All the achievements are under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We have considered that we are working along the correct path but continuity must be sustained with forward planning to keep in pace with the development of the pastoral plan of the Diocese. The ministry of the diaconate has been developed fruitfully in the Hong Kong Diocese for over a decade gaining the support from the Catholic community. It is an encouraging sign that there is an increase in the number of applicants. The Commission is exploring the development of structured modules in training and the approaches in promotion. It is envisaged that each parish in the Hong Kong Diocese will have the service of Permanent Deacons.

Acknowledgement

23. We thank all members of the Commission, the organizations in the Diocese for their support and encouragement in the formation training, planning and guidance of the diaconate ministry. We also thank all Deacons, Candidates and their families for their dedication to promote Love and to witness Faith.

The Diocesan Commission of Permanent Diaconate of Hong Kong

31 December 2009

Hong Kong

Appendix I – List of appointments, parish pastoral work and community services

Appendix II – Prayer for the Permanent Deacons

Appendix I

List of Appointments, Parish pastoral work and Community services 2009

Permanent Deacons	Parish	Community service	Diocesan Organizations
Peter Lo	Retired		
Karl Tsang	Holy Redeemer Church	Bereavement pastoral service, hospital pastoral care	Diocesan Commission for Hospital Pastoral Care, Diocesan Ecumenical Commission
Paul Yeow	St. Jude's Church	Bereavement pastoral service, family pastoral care	Commission for the ongoing formation of the clergy
Joseph Yung	Annunciation Church	Bereavement pastoral service, prison visits	Diocesan Board of Catholic cemeteries
Joseph Sung	St. Thomas the Apostle Church	Bereavement pastoral service, labour, education	Diocesan Commission for the Permanent Diaconate, Hong Kong Catholic Commission for Labour Affairs, Diocesan Vocations Commission, Diocesan Liturgy Commission
Joseph Chow	St. John the Baptist Church	Bereavement pastoral service, education, reception of visiting religious from Mainland	Diocesan Pastoral Council
Francis Tse	St. Teresa's Church	Bereavement pastoral service, prison visits	
Edwin Ng	Catholic Cathedral	Bereavement pastoral service, prison visits, family pastoral care	Diocesan Liturgy Commission
Francis Cheung	Pastoral work of the Dominican Order		
Peter Leung	St. Benedict Church	Hospital Pastoral care	Diocesan Commission for Hospital Pastoral

			Care
Francis Fung	Rosary Church	Bereavement pastoral service, school pastoral care and St. Vincent de Paul	Diocesan Board of Catholic Cemeteries, Diocesan Commission for Interreligious Dialogue

Candidates

Louis Wong	Catholic Cathedral		
Kwan Chung Wah	Star of the Sea Church	Labour	Diocesan Commission for Pastoral Services to the Disabled, Labour Pastoral Centre
Bernard Tang	Christ the Worker Church		Hong Kong Catholic Commission for Labour Affairs
Bosco Wong	St. Stephen's Church		
Peter Ho	On overseas training		
Paul Siu	Resurrection Church		
Li Fook Sang	Our Lady of Lourdes Church	Rehabilitation	Diocesan Pastoral Commission for Marriage and the Family,
Stephen Kwok	Mother of Good Counsel Church	Labour	Diocesan Liturgy Commission

Appendix II

Prayer for Permanent Deacons

Almighty and Eternal God,

You have chosen our Permanent Deacons to assist the Bishops and their community of priests to evangelize, to participate in Christ's sacrifice and to foster love and care through their ministries.

May You send the Holy Spirit upon them so they can fulfill their mission loyally, particularly in preaching what they believe, to teach what they believe, and to live in the way they teach.

O Lord, may they possess all the virtues as in the Gospels,

to love without fear, to care for the deprived, to live with honour, to preserve with simplicity and to cooperate with obedience.

May they be totally loyal to the Church, to witness their faith with a pure heart, to be a fervent follower of the Son of God in this temporal life, and to live and reign with you in the day to come.

We ask these in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.