

Diocesan Commission for Permanent Diaconate of Hong Kong
Annual Report 2011

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. Bishop John Tong appointed/reappointed on 22 February 2010 the following persons to be members of the Commission for the period from 1 February 2010 to 31 January 2012:

Chairman: Fr. Dominic Chan, Vicar General

Members : Fr. Paul Kim Dong Ju, KMS, Fr. Ephraim Lam, Fr. Benedict Lam, 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 , 4 meetings were held on 18 January, 12 April, 5 July and 11 October respectively.

Highlights

5. The highlights were focused on the strengthening of the spiritual formation, expanding the learning spectrum, promoting continual learning, and deepening the formation models of Permanent Deacons, Candidates and Aspirants. Details are further elaborated in paragraphs 14 to 18.

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 14 Permanent Deacons in the Hong Kong Diocese. 10 candidates are under training on

theology 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. **Deacon Francis Tse** and his family migrated to Texas, USA in June. He is assigned by Cardinal Daniel NiDardo to continue his diaconate ministry in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. **Deacon Bosco Wong** left for Belgium in September to undertake a two-year course on Philosophy at the University of Louvain. **Candidate Peter Ho** has completed his doctor degree course on Marriage and Family at John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family, Melbourne, Australia. Mr. Ho has returned Hong Kong in December. 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. Admission – **Mr. Wong King Shing Peter** and **Mr. Kwong Kwok Chuen Cosmas** were admitted as Candidates at St. Thomas the Apostle Church on 6 August 2011.

8. Ministry of Lectors and Ministry of Acolyte – On 27 August 2011 at the St. Jude's Church, North Point, the ministry of Lectors was conferred to **Candidates Au Kar Wai Andrew, Chu Nim Cho Charles** ; the ministry of Acolyte was conferred to **Candidates Louis Wong, Lam Sair Ling** and **Ip Wai Wing**.

9. 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, as well as helping the Parish Priests to assess their performance. 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.

10. 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.

10.1 Clinical psychologists are invited to give assessments to the aspirants and the admission of candidates.

10.2 Home visits are held to candidates, aspirants and applicants to have a better understanding from them and their family members on their responses to the deacon ministry.

10.3 For the Permanent Deacons, to pay attention to their growth in spirituality, and their family harmony.

10.4 The Formation Director arranges Spiritual Directors and mentors to accompany and support the Deacons, Candidates and Aspirants to grow in their spiritual lives.

10.5 For the strengthening of a community life and sharing of life experience, the Formation Director assigns Permanent Deacons to play the role as mentors for the candidates and aspirants.

10.6 The Formation Director meets with the wives of the Deacons and Candidates regularly to establish a "Walk in Company Programme" in the form of companionship for mutual support to help them share their life experience of their ministerial role as wives of Deacons through prayers and to walk in company. Executive member Ms Louise Wong had on 22 August 2011 presented a formation sharing to the wives of Deacons, Candidates and Aspirants. The title was "The ministry of the Permanent Deacon" . The topics covered : (1) the Sacrament of Holy Orders, this is the sacrament of apostolic ministry, a special grace of the Holy Spirit, as a representative of Christ, head of the Church. It comprises of three degrees, with a collegial form and a personal character. (2) the Sacred Order of the Diaconate: "it is not for the celebration of the Eucharist but for service"; (3) What is Permanent Diaconate: the term "permanent diaconate" is relative to the diaconate which is a step towards the priesthood, for the latter, diaconate is merely an intermediate stage for preparing priestly ordination. "One of the fruits of the Second Vatican Council is to restore the diaconate as a proper and permanent rank of the hierarchy". Diaconate can be conferred to married men.(4) The ministry of the Permanent Deacons :Diaconia of the word, Diaconia of the liturgy, Diaconia of charity, the three contexts of the diaconal ministry represent a unity in service.

10.7 Candidates Wong King Shing Peter and Chu Nim Cho Charles participated in the Asian Pastoral Conference Asipa2 held at Indonesia during the period 13-21 October 2011.

Visit to the Essen Diocese

11. Bishop John Tong accompanied by the Formation Director Rev. Dominic Chan VG, Rev. Paul Kam, Rev. Sister Goretti Yeung and Mr. So Wai Yin visited the Essen Diocese, Germany on 22 May to 28 May 2011. A familiarization visit was made with their Formation Director and their core members of the Essen diocese and to share with each other the formation experiences. The Essen Diocese has since Vatican II in 1967 established the deacons community over these four and half decades. At present there are 80 permanent deacons. Because the geographical boundary of the diocese covers a wide area, formation programme commences

immediately after each recruitment exercise. The programme is organized over a minimum period of 3 years, scheduled at 3 days and 2 nights every month. The wives can also participate. The diaconate ministry is welcome by the community. Again, because of the wide geographical coverage, some candidates may have travelling problems for full attendance. Although the Hong Kong Diocese takes a step behind in establishing the diaconate ministry, it is felt encouraging that the Holy Spirit Seminary (Philosophy and Theology) has provided the requisite basic theologian curriculum, supplemented by such organization like the Hong Kong Catholic Biblical Institute and supplemented by tailor-made formation programmes, and requiring the candidates to attend not less than two social service attachment programmes will have fulfilled the training needs for the deacons.

The Global Chinese Permanent Deacons Sharing Workshop

12. The year 2013 marks the 20th anniversary of the establishment of Permanent Diaconate of the Hong Kong Diocese. The Diocese has decided that opportunity is taken to review the progress of development and to seek the solidarity of our Chinese brother deacons serving in other parts of the world to share their witness lives and to explore the responses to the needs of the time. A working group has been formed to plan and to establish contacts seeking their responses. The planned proposed discussion subjects include :

- (1) sharing of the formation programmes
- (2) sharing of the experience of diaconate ministry
- (3) sharing of the deacons' spiritual life
- (4) sharing of the deacons' wives and family participating in the ministry
- (5) explore how to respond to the needs of the time

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

Married Couples Spiritual Formation

14. Fr. Benedict Lam has since 2007 organized with the help of a number of Deacon/Candidate and their wives "family spiritual camps" aiming at promoting and sharing prayer life in families, to deepen their relationship with the Lord. The Fourth "Family Spiritual Camp" was held at Diocesan Retreat House at Stanley on 2 and 3 July 2011 with an attendance of 27.

14.1 Permanent Deacons being enriched in the basic spiritual life, after formation, can help develop spirituality in Catholic families as a response to one of the Diocesan Pastoral priorities i.e. the promotion of married couples spiritual

formation. It is recommended that the deacons community will organize at deanery/parish level regular retreats for married couples on spiritual formation and reflections in collaboration with the Diocesan Pastoral Commission for Marriage as a promotion of Catholic family formation programme.

Focus learning.

15. The Commission arranges in the Permanent Deacons' monthly gathering a session for specific topic learning, experience sharing, with a view to expanding their knowledge and vision:

23 January	Dental care introduced by Dentist Wong Choi Sang
27 February	Visit to Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception sharing their gratitude and Joy
27 March	Introduction of Lent and the Year of the Laity by Rev. Dominic Chan, VG Experience sharing given by Permanent Deacon Raymond Chan of the Northern Alberta Diocese, Canada
24 April	Introduction of the Diaconate ministry by Rev. Pierre Lam, VG and his experience sharing in the Bordeaux Diocese
22 May	Sharing of the deacons' pastoral work and a farewell to Deacon Francis Tse
26 June	Spinal care introduced by chiropractic doctor Wan Man Ho
24 July	Visit to the Daughters of Charity of the Canossian Institute understanding their mission is to respond to the needs of the community to demonstrate the Church's presence
25 September	Sharing given by Deacon Stephen Kwok on his study of the Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) to help relieve the emotional problems, and enhancement in spirituality
27 November	Sharing given by candidates Wong King Shing Peter and Chu Nim Cho Charles on their participation in the Asian Pastoral Conference Asipa2 held at Indonesia during 13-21 October 2011, and their visit to the parish faith community groups, their models of bible sharing, establishing faith community groups and training of leaders

Continual Learning

16.1 As required under Chapter 4 of the Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons, a continuing formation system is introduced, encouraging

deacons to undertake in a two year cycle professional development studies of an accumulated 25 hours. The subjects cover :

- (i) Enhancement of Leadership abilities: to require Permanent Deacons to participate in practical pastoral courses, theology and philosophy courses, personal growth and development course, enhancement of parish and resources management abilities, deepen their personal spirituality and encourage them to strengthen their commitment to the Church.
- (ii) Enhancement of Pastoral Effectiveness: to encourage Permanent Deacons to participate in spiritual formation to enrich their spirituality, to maintain solidarity with deacon communities in other places and affiliated church organizations through contacts and dialogue with a view to expanding their exposure and vision to serve for the formation of the faithful, the community and the Church more effectively.

16.2 The Permanent Deacons have to maintain these records for submission to the Formation Director for endorsement.

Annual Retreats

17. Retreats were held to deepen the spiritual formation of Deacons, Candidates and Aspirants:

date	Target group	venue	Spiritual Director	topic
5-6 May	Aspirants	Cannosian Sacred Heart Convent	Rev.Dominic Chan, VG	Personal sanctification, sanctification of others, and contribute to a better world
27-29 May	Deacons and wives	Honeyville Canossian Convent	Rev. Sister Monica Wong, FDCC	The encounter of the Lord in the depth of the heart
29-30 October	Candidates	Honeyville Canossian Convent	Rev.Dominic Chan, VG	The reflections on the calling of the Deacon vocation
18-20 October	Deacons and wives	St. Paul's House of	Fr. Anthony Chang	Spirituality in Nature

		Prayer, Sheung Shui		
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Formation Learning

18. The Commission arranges short term courses for deacons, candidates and Aspirants to strengthen their understanding on bible, preaching, prison pastoral ministry with a view to helping them in performing their ministries:

subject	date	contents
Scripture Pastoral work Hong Kong Catholic Biblical Association	28 February, 7,14,21 and 28 March 2011	A study from Chapter 6 of Dei Verbum and the 2010 Apostolic exhortation Verbum Domini in relation to the scripture pastoral work in Hong Kong Lectio Divina Basic work of Bible Study Groups Bible sharing and practices Bible studies and practices
Homiletics Rev. Michael Yeung, VG	4, 11 and 18 April 2011	Homily and communication
Sermon Rev. Joseph Yim	23,30 May and 13,20 June 2011	Skills in delivering sermons and practices
Prison Pastoral care Deacon Edwin Ng	5,19,26 September and 3 October 2011	Foundational prison pastoral theology The establishments in the Correctional Services Department, Hong Kong Types of correctional institutions Hong Kong

		Legislation on correctional services and volunteers Religious and volunteers to enter to the institutions
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Familiarization Visits

19. The Commission arranged for the Deacons and Candidates familiarization visits to diocesan organizations for a better understanding of their work. No visit was organized in view of the tight learning schedule in the year.

Promotion

20. All Deacons and Candidates will personally approach potential Catholics to encourage them to respond to 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 regularly. Promotion is also carried out in parishes where admissions, lectors and acolyte are administered.

The Deacons' Community

21. For the development of the solidarity of the Deacons, the Diocese has allocated two classrooms at the former 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 and their families will meet in the afternoon of the 4th Sunday of each month to practice Lectio Divina, experience sharing, Vesper practices. Approval has been given to allocate suitable accommodation within the Catholic Diocese Centre for "The Deacons' Corner" and to release the present premises for parish use which is under heavy demand. Regular gatherings are also held as leisure hours to share fun and laughter.

22. Schools are the nursing ground for evangelization. The deacons and candidates are considered to be the most suitable resource persons to promote the evangelization because of their formation in theology and catechism training to support the parish and school. The following programmes have commenced :

- regional catechism classes for teachers and staff
- to conduct religious liturgies and spiritual activities in schools

23. 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.

24. 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

25. The work of the Commission has been in progress as planned. The ministry of the diaconate has been developed fruitfully in the Hong Kong Diocese for over 15 years gaining the support from the Catholic and the public community. It is an encouraging sign that there is an increase in the number of applicants. The Commission is exploring the further development of structured modules in training and the approaches in promotion. The following plans are under consideration:

- 25.1 To plan a retreat for the Commission members for spiritual formation, review of present progress, and planning for further development marching into the new era;
- 25.2 Strengthening the deacons' solidarity community spirit promoting mutual learning and support;
- 25.3 To plan a continuing formation programme for the deacons in their first 3 years after ordination strengthening their religious life and ministry;
- 25.4 Strengthening school pastoral work;
- 25.5 To further develop the prison visit ministry as a basic charitable work of the permanent deacons to bring Christ's love to the inmates;
- 25.6 To plan and organize the Global Chinese Permanent Deacons Sharing Workshop 2013 strengthening the further development of the diaconate ministry.

Acknowledgement

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

The Diocesan Commission of Permanent Diaconate of Hong Kong
31 December 2011

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 2011

Permanent Deacons	Parish	Community service	Diocesan Organisations
Peter Lo	retired		
Karl Tsang	Holy Redeemer Church	Hospital pastoral care	Diocesan Commission for Hospital Pastoral care
Paul Yeow	St. Jude's Church	Elderly	
Joseph Yung	retired		
Joseph Sung	Annunciation Church	Labour	Diocesan Commission for the Permanent Diaconate, Hong Kong Catholic Commission for Labour Affairs, Commission for the ongoing formation of the clergy
Joseph Chow	St. John the Baptist Church	Reception of visiting religious from Mainland	
Francis Tse	Migrated to USA		
Edwin Ng	Catholic Cathedral	Prison visits	
Francis Cheung	Pastoral work of the Dominican Order		
Peter Leung	St. Teresa's Church	Hospital Pastoral Care, Reception of visiting religious from Mainland	Diocesan Commission for Hospital Pastoral Care, Diocesan Ecumenical Commission, Hong Kong Catholic Commission for Labour Affairs, Spiritual Director of Catholic Scouts
Francis Fung	Rosary Church, Kowloon	Bereavement pastoral service	Diocesan Board of Catholic Cemeteries, Diocesan Commission

			for Interreligious Dialogue
William Li	Our Lady of Lourdes Church	Marriage Pastoral Care	Diocesan Pastoral Commission for Marriage and the Family
Bernard Tang	St. Margaret's Church	Elderly	
Bosco Wong	Overseas study		
Stephen Kwok	Mother of Good Counsel Church	Liturgy	Diocesan Liturgy Commission

Candidates

Kwan Chung Wah	Our Lady of Lourdes Church	Prison visits	Diocesan Commission for Pastoral Services to the Disabled, Diocesan Commission for Hospital Pastoral care
Paul Siu	Mother of Christ Church, Sheung Shui	Labour	
Peter Ho	On overseas studies		
Louis Wong	St. Jude's Church	Marriage	
Lam Sair Ling	Holy Cross Church	Education	Diocesan Building and Development Commission
Ip Wai Wing	Mary, Help of Christians Church	Education	Diocesan Building and Development Commission
Chu Nim Cho Charles	Norte Dame Church	Prison visits	
Au Kar Wai	Catholic Cathedral	Prison visits	Diocesan Lenten Organising Committee, Hong Kong Catholic Education Development Committee

Kwong Kwok Chuen Cosmas	St. Thomas the Apostle Church		Hong Kong Catholic Commission for Labour Affairs,
Wong King Shing Peter	St. Joseph's Church, Fan Ling		

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.