

Diocesan Commission for Permanent Diaconate of Hong Kong
Annual Report 2008

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 2008, 3 meetings were held on 1 February, 2 May and 29 August 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 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 8 Permanent Deacons in the Hong Kong Diocese. 11 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. Permanent Deacon Joseph Yung has reached the age of 75 and in accordance with the rules of diocesan religious, applied to the diocesan bishop his intention of retirement. Cardinal Joseph Zen approved to allow Deacon Yung continue his service.

7. Ministry of Lectors – The Ministry of Lectors was conferred to the following 7 candidates on 17 May 2008 at the Resurrection Church, Kwun Tong : William Li, Paul Siu, Bernard Tang, Bosco Wong, Peter Ho, Stephen Kwok and Francis Fung.

8. Ministry of Acolyte – the Ministry of Acolyte was conferred to Candidate Peter Leung on 26 July 2008 at St. Benedict Church, Sha Tin.

9. Admission – Candidate Louis Wong was admitted on 24 August 2008 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

10. 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.

11. 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 to accompany and support them to grow in their spiritual lives.

2. 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.

Formation Needs for the wives of Permanent Deacons

13. The Commission has expressed concern on the formation needs of the wives of Permanent Deacons. A Working Group was formed to explore the vocation and role of the wives of the Permanent Deacons. The Working Group recommends that it is necessary to organize training courses, regular gatherings and sharing groups for the wives, including wives of the Candidates to help them prepare themselves to take up their future role, 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; to encourage the wives to participate in the spiritual formation programmes, retreats for a better understanding of the pastoral services of their husbands. Because of their experience of family life, there is the unique advantage to promote family pastoral care through their witnesses. The Working Group recommends that there is an urgent need for this formation programme. The recommendations are accepted by the Commission and actions are under planning for implementation.

Formation and continual learning

Target learning

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

27 January	Fr. Philip Chan on Lectio Divina
24 February	Deacon Joseph Chow's sharing on his faith and experience, teaching experience, family life and health
23 March	Ms Susana Cheung on "Re-defining Learning"
27 April	Fr. Simon Li on "Christian concern on social issues"
22 June	Fr. Ephraim Lam on "pastoral cycle" and "Omnibus Omnia" in service
27 July	Ms. Jennie Chor on her working experience in handling

	labour issues with Christian viewpoint
28 September	Deacon Francis Tse's sharing on his vocation
26 October	Ms. Louise Wong on the role of the wives of Permanent Deacons
23 November	Introduce the "Alpha Course"

Annual Retreat

15. The annual retreat was held on 16 to 18 July 2008 at the Precious Blood Convent, Fanling for the Deacons, Candidates and their wives. The Retreat Master was Fr. John Kwan. The theme was "spirituality plus deacons' ministries"

Continual Formation

16. Fr. Benedict Lam has organized with the help of 3 Deacon/Candidate families a "family spiritual camp" at the Diocesan Retreat House for 9 families on 8 to 9 November 2008. This formation programme is aimed at promoting and sharing prayer life in families, to deepen their relationship with the Lord. It is planned that the experience gained will form the basis for the development of family spirituality formation.

Continued Training

17. The Commission arranges short term courses for deacons and candidates to strengthen their understanding on liturgies, pastoral and preaching knowledge:

7, 14 March	Church Ministries	Fr. Savio Hon, SDB
28 March	Church Ministries	Ms. Louise Wong
11, 18, 25 April	Church Ministries	Fr. Stephen Chan, OFM
6,13,20,27 August	Preaching practices	Fr. Joseph Yim

The course on liturgies is under planning.

Familiarization Visits

18. The Commission expected that Deacons and Candidates could have familiarization visits to diocesan organizations for a better understanding of their work. Due to their commitments in their work, it is difficult to make such arrangements. However, attempts have now been made to arrange visits to those organizations which have extended opening hours. The first visit was made on 17 November 2008 to the Diocesan Liturgical Commission. The next visit is planned on 12 January 2009 to the Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council.

Promotion

19. 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 Deacon's Corner

20. 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 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.

21. 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.

22. 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>

Obituary

23. Deacon Francis Wong passed away on 29 September 2008. Deacon Wong was ordained on 13 January 2001 at the Catholic Cathedral. He had served at the Catholic Cathedral, Christ the Worker Church at Kwun Tong and the Rosary Church at Tsimshatsui. He had promoted and started bereavement pastoral service in parishes to help families overcome and relieve difficulties and understand eternal life. During his pastoral service at the Rosary Church, he had established a "cotton guilt group" to organize the parishioners to make warm clothing for the under-privileged and deprived sectors of the community. These are pioneer projects. Deacon Wong had demonstrated his fulfillment of the three characteristic ministries: preaching, witness and service. We pray to Deacon Wong to join together with our beloved Cardinal John Baptist Wu in Heaven who had approved to establish the diaconate ministry in Hong Kong for their blessing.

Review and Forward

24. 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. We have set a 5 year plan with these primary objectives :

(i) to develop continual formation, to support maintaining the harmony of the family life of Deacons and Candidates, to deepen the spiritualities; deacons and their families will play an essential role in the promotion of family evangelization and Faith Re-engineering;

(ii) to explore and design different formation programmes to meet the individual needs of Deacons, Candidates and Aspirants who are in the younger generation sector.

Acknowledgement

25. 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
December 2008
Hong Kong

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

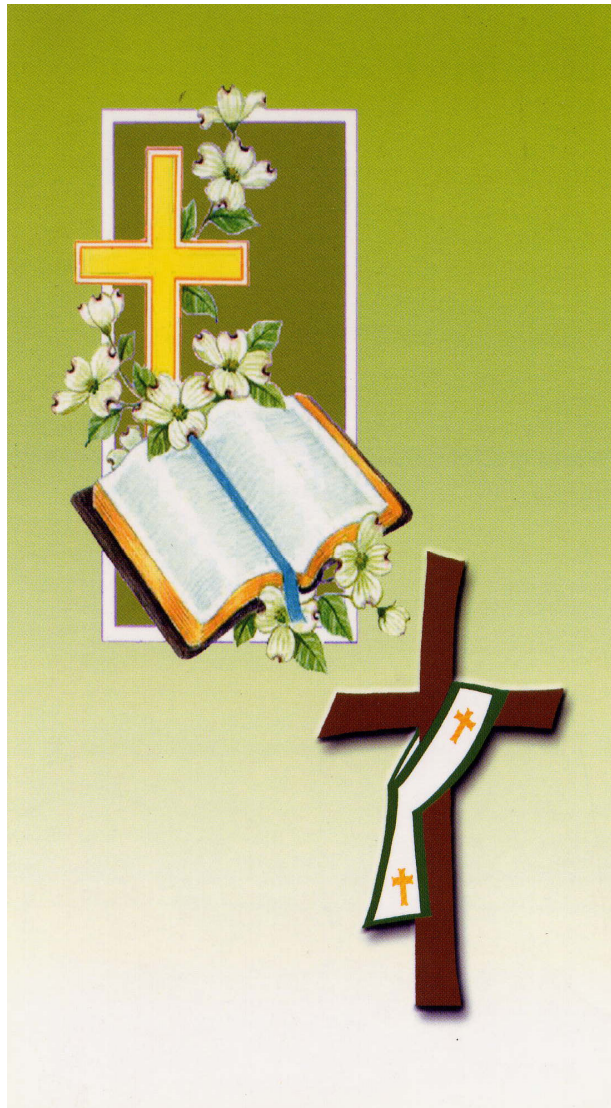
Appendix II – Prayer for the Permanent Deacons

List of Appointments, Parish pastoral work and Community services

Permanent Deacons	Parish	Community service	Diocesan Organizations
Peter Lo	Mother of Good Counsel Church	Bereavement pastoral service, prison visits	
Karl Tsang	Holy Redeemer Church	Bereavement pastoral service, hospital pastoral care	Diocesan Commission for Hospital Pastoral Care, Diocesan Ecumenical Commission
Francis Wong (passed away on 29 September 2008)	Rosary Church	Bereavement pastoral service, family pastoral care	Diocesan Board of Catholic cemeteries
Paul Yeow	St. Jude's Church	Bereavement pastoral service, family pastoral care	Committee 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	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 Building and Development Commission
Francis Tse	St. Teresa's Church	Bereavement pastoral service, prison visits	Diocesan Catechetical Commission
Edwin Ng	Catholic Cathedral	Bereavement pastoral service, prison visits, family pastoral care	Diocesan Liturgy Commission, Diocesan Pastoral Council
Candidates			
Louis Wong			
Francis Cheung			
Nestor Kwan			
Bernard Tang	Mother of Good Counsel Church		Hong Kong Catholic Commission for labour affairs
Peter Leung	St. Benedict Church	Hospital pastoral care	
Bosco Wong	St. Thomas the Apostle Church		Diocesan Youth Commission
Peter Ho	St. Margaret's Church		Diocesan Pastoral Council, Diocesan Pastoral Commission for Marriage and the Family, Provisional pastoral team for homosexuals
Paul Siu	Resurrection Church		

William Li	Our Lady of Lourdes Church	Rehabilitation	Justice and Peace Commission of the Hong Kong Catholic Diocese, Diocesan Pastoral Commission for Marriage and the Family,
Stephen Kwok	Mother of Christ Church		Diocesan Liturgy Commission
Francis Fung	Star of the Sea Church	Bereavement pastoral service	Diocesan Commission for Interreligious Dialogue, Kowloon labour pastoral centre, Diocesan Board of Catholic cemeteries



Prayer for Permanent Deacons

Almighty and Eternal Lord,

You have chosen our Permanent Deacons to assist the Bishop and his community of priests

to preach, to witness and to foster love through their servant ministry.

May the Holy Spirit rest upon them to make them fulfill their mission in preaching what they believe,

to teach what they believe and to live in the way what they teach.

O Lord, may they possess all the virtues as the Scripture tells:

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

May they show a deep rooted faith to the Church and to demonstrate witness with a pure heart so as to be a follower of the Son of God in this temporal life and to enjoy the everlasting life and power with the Lord in the days to come. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.