

Diocesan Commission for Permanent Diaconate of Hong Kong Annual Report 2010

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 15 January, 19 April, 12 July and 27 October respectively. Bishop John Tong was invited to join the January meeting to familiarize himself with the progress of the Commission. Bishop Tong invited the Commission to take further proactive measures to promote the diaconate ministry in Hong Kong to meet the growing pastoral needs and to have more inflows with the Universal Church.

Highlights

5. The highlights were focused on the strengthening of the spiritual formation, expanding the learning spectrum, promoting continual learning, and reviewing the formation models of Permanent Deacons, Candidates and Aspirants. Details are further elaborated in paragraphs 13 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 15 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 doctor degree 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. The Formation Director keeps close contact on his performance.

7. Admission – Mr. Lam Sair Ling and Mr. Yip Wai Wing were admitted as Candidates at Mary, Help of Christians Church on 20 March 2010; Mr. Andrew Au and Mr. Chu Nim Cho were admitted on 20 November 2010 as Candidates at Holy Cross Church.

8. Ministry of Lectors – Mr. Louis Wong, Mr. Lam Sair Ling and Mr. Yip Wai Wing received the Ministry on 20 November 2010 at Holy Cross Church

9. Ordination – Mr. William Li Fook Sung, Mr. Bernard Tang Bun, Mr. Bosco Wong and Mr. Stephen Kwok Ping Fai were ordained on 24 July 2010 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, officiated by Bishop John Tong.

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. He also arranges for the Deacons, Candidates and Aspirants their spiritual directors and mentors in the role of navigator to accompany and support them to grow in their spiritual lives. The Formation Director meets with the wives of the Deacons and Candidates to introduce 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.

12. 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 Exposures and Experience Sharing

13. The Deacon ministry has been in service over a decade and the deacon community has now grown to an encouraging size. It is considered necessary to have a better knowledge on how and what our brother permanent deacons are trained in other dioceses of our Catholic Church. An exposure programme has been examined. The first study was to approach the American dioceses (through the National Association of Diaconate Directors, NADD) where the diaconate has a long service history and over 17,000 permanent deacons are serving the community. Opportunity was taken to visit the Hawaii diocese for fact finding. The Hong Kong Delegation comprising Deacon Edwin Ng and wife, Deacon Joseph Sung and Deacon Bosco Wong and wife, paid a study visit to Hawaii in the summer from 8 to 22 September.

13.1 the Hawaii Diocese establishes a formation programme with the support from the local Catholic university, Chaminade University of Honolulu, and other professionals. The characteristics of the formation programme:

- The programme, comprises of academic training, ministerial formation and pastoral practices, runs continuously in a 5 year cycle attended by both the husband and wife once a month (from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon every month). It also aims at building up a community spirit.
- An emphasis on how the theology can be put into pastoral practices
- Focus on respect of life and marriage
- Growth in personal development
- Must attend the “Prison Visit” ministry training
- Attach to a parish at the last 18 months
- Scientific/psychological and spiritual assessments in selection of aspirants and the acceptance of candidates

- Strengthen continual learning, after ordination, with a minimum attendance of 25 hours within 2 years

The service of the permanent diaconate is highly welcomed by the community.

13.2 The Hong Kong experience was shared with the Hawaii deacons and candidates. In particular, the Hong Kong formation programme, though it might appear to be different in building community spirit when compared with the Hawaii counterpart, enjoys the strengths and benefits of

- ✓ A well-established theology course offered by the Holy Spirit Seminary college;
- ✓ Solidarity is promoted through the regular monthly gatherings;
- ✓ Guidance is provided through navigator/mentorship.

Married Couples Spiritual Formation

14. 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. The deacon community is considered the appropriate party the 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..... Working with the Diocesan Pastoral Commission for Marriage, this proposal will be included in their family formation programmes. To keep the programme in momentum, the Third “Family Spiritual Camp” was held at Retreat House on 21 and 22 August 2010 with 18 couples attended.

Structured Training Programme

15. As a follow up in the implementation of assigning Permanent Deacons in the service spectrum, it is considered that opportunity could be taken to incorporate other service areas to form a structured training programme to run in cycle term. A pilot scheme was tried incorporating “education”, a platform for evangelization; “labour”, a common concern for both employers and employees as well and “rehabilitation”, service for the less-privileged. An 18 sessions on selected subjects

were held during 31 May to 2 August 2010. Leading professionals in these disciplines are invited to be speakers. In view of these subjects are related to our daily life, the programme is open to the seminarians the wives of deacons, candidates and Aspirants to enrich them on a better understanding of these subjects. 31 members of the diaconate community and 5 Seminarians attended. The pilot scheme has proved to be successful and future programme will include subjects such as Elderly service, Prison visits, Hospital visits, Bereavement pastoral service . Demonstrations on Bible sharing will also be included to help the Deacons and Candidates prepare their lectoral role in practice. A detailed schedule is at Appendix III.

Permanent Deacons’ formation and continued learning

Target learning

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

24 January	Sharing by Aspirants Lam Sair Ling and wife, Yip Wai Wing; Deacon Tse Ming Fai sharing on his pilgrimage to the Holy Land
28 February	Deacon Joseph Chow’s sharing on the pastoral work at St. John parish in the blessing of pregnant mothers
28 March	Candidate Yip Wai Wing’s sharing on his vocation. Deacon Francis Cheung’s sharing on his pastoral work at St. Patrick parish
25 April	Sharing on the parish work at Christ the Worker, St. Stephen and our Lady of Lourdes parishes
23 May	Fr. Paul Leung, SDB on his missionary ministry at Mongolia
27 June	Sharing on vocation and prayer session for the 4 candidates to be ordained in July
25 July	Sharing from the newly ordained Permanent Deacons and their wives
26 September	Briefing of the Hawaii Study Visit
24 October	Fr. Michael Yeung, VG on “The Spirit of the Servant”
28 November	Deacon Edwin Ng sharing on his ministry
26 December	Deacon Peter Leung sharing on Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons – self formation

Annual Retreat

17. The annual retreat was held on 19 to 21 July 2010 at the Honeyville Canossian Convent, Mount Davis for the Deacons, Candidates and their wives. The Retreat Master was Fr. Edward Chau. The theme was “The Cry of Love”

Formation Learning

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

18.1 Doctrine formation - **Missiology**: A training course on missiology, conducted by Fr Paul Leung, SDB was arranged on 14, 21, 28 April 2010 and a full day workshop on 21 May 2010 . The training was well attended by 19 members of the permanent diaconate group. The training covers the history, development, theological reflection, ecclesiological foundation of missiology in the first two sessions. Key challenges in proclamation or evangelization including interreligious dialogue and Inculturation were discussed in the third lesson. The workshop was to study the concept of mission in three recent church documents including the Decree (Ad Gentes) 1965, Apostolic exhortation (Evangelii Nuntiandi) 1975, and Papal Encyclical (Redemptoris Missio) 1990, and also the model of mission in the Bible.

18.2 **Sacred Music**: A training course on sacred music, taught by Fr Peter Choi and Ms Agnes Hwong of Diocesan Sacred Music Commission, was arranged on 1 ,15 and 22 November 2010 respectively. The training was well attended by 23 members of the permanent diaconate group. The group training included the definition and some basic concept of sacred music by Fr Peter Choi and vocal training by Ms Agnes Hwong. One more group training lesson on selection of songs by Fr Peter Choi will be arranged in January 2011. Individual vocal training by music teachers of Diocesan Sacred Music Commission on one-to-one basis is currently under coordination with Fr Peter Choi for interested members of the permanent diaconate group.

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 answer 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. Promotion was also carried out in parishes where admissions were administered.

The Deacons' Corner

21. 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. Plans are in mind to identify 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. On 29 August 2010, the Deacons community and family members paid a pilgrimage visit and celebrated a Thanksgiving Mass at the St. Joseph's Church at Yim Tin Chai Island, Sai Kung. This is an heritage church building awarded by the Asia Pacific Heritage Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. The visit was intended to follow the footsteps of the early missionaries in evangelization.

22. 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.

23. 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

24. 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 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 further development of structured modules in training and the approaches in promotion. The following plans are under consideration:

24.1 With experience gained over these years, it is considered desirable to devise the training model for each group with specific targets: **for Aspirants**, to include regular week-end retreats for reflections and study of the “Deacon’s Handbook” and the “Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons and Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons” before admission; **for Candidates**, to include regular retreats for reflections and for Deacons, to introduce enhanced retreats and a continual learning programme in the form of accumulating learning hours system under academic, spiritual and pastoral.

24.2 A clinical psychological assessment will be introduced to determine the character maturity of the individual suitable for the ministry.

24.3 To plan a Study tour to visit the Essen Diocese, Germany where some 60 permanent deacons are in service as an on going exposure programme arising from the Hawaii visit.

24.4 To plan a seminar for Chinese speaking deacons for experience sharing on the development of the permanent diaconate ministry in the new era.

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, 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 2010

Hong Kong

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

Appendix II – Prayer for the Permanent Deacons

Appendix III – Schedule of subjects in the Continual Formation Programme 2010

Appendix I

List of Appointments, Parish pastoral work and Community services 2010

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		Diocesan Board of Catholic Cemeteries
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	Diocesan Pastoral Council
Francis Tse	St. Teresa's Church	Education	
Edwin Ng	Catholic Cathedral	Prison visits	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, Diocesan Ecumenical commission
Francis Fung	Rosary Church	Bereavement pastoral service	Diocesan Ecumenical Commission, 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 (Chairman)
Bernard Tang	St. Margaret's Church	Elderly	Hong Kong Catholic Commission for Labour Affairs, Diocesan Vocations Commission
Bosco Wong	St. Stephen's Church	Education	
Stephen Kwok	Mother of Good Counsel Church	Labour	Diocesan Liturgy Commission

Candidates

Kwan Chung Wah	Star of the Sea Church	Labour	Diocesan Commission for Pastoral Services to the Disabled, Labour Pastoral Centre
Paul Siu	Resurrection Church		
Peter Ho	On overseas training		
Louis Wong	St. Jude's Church	Marriage	
Lam Sair Ling	Holy Cross Church	Education	
Yip Wai Wing	Mary, Help of Christians Church	Education	
Chu Nim Cho	Norte Dame Church		
Au Kar Wai	Catholic Cathedral		

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.

Schedule of subjects in the Continual Formation Programme 2010(Education, Labour, Rehabilitation)

Period : 31 May to 2 August 2010 (Mondays)

Time : 7.00 p. m. to 9.30 p.m.

Venue : Conference Room, Catholic Diocese Centre

Session	Date	Service	Subject	Speaker
1	31 May	Rehabilitation	Policy on Rehabilitation, service areas, preventive measures and medical rehab	Ms Ophelia Chan
2		Education	The development of Education – challenges in schools	Mr. Chan Kin Hung
3	7 June	Education	Primary School Education and examples in SMC operations	Principal Ho Yee Har Elizabeth
4		Labour	How to be a Christian Employer or Employee	Mrs Jennie Chor
5	14 June	Labour	Main labour services provided by Government	Mrs Jennie Chor
6		Rehabilitation	Pre-school training and parent support	Ms Betty Wong
7	21 June	Labour	The Employment Ordinance (I)	Mrs Jennie Chor
8		Education	Special Education – Main Services provided by government	Ms Eugene Wu
9	28 June	Rehabilitation	Community Care and support, employment and Occupational Rehab	Ms Ophelia Chan
10		Education	School Pastoral Work	Principal Au Kar Wai Deacon Joseph Sung
11	5 July	Education	The Changes in Education System and Assessments	Dr. Francis Cheung Wing Ming
12		Rehabilitation	Disables' role in church and religious activities	Dr. Chan Kwok Keung
13	12 July	Education	The SMC – Education Ordinance, Code of Aid	Mr. Lee Sai Kin
14		Labour	The Employment Ordinance (II)	Mrs Jennie Chor

15	26 July	Labour	The Employee Compensation matters	Mrs Jennie Chor
16		Rehabilitation	Access, facilities, transport, information, leisure, culture and public education	Mr. Hansen Lee
17	2 August	Rehabilitation	How to live with the disables	Ms Opheria Chan
18		Labour	Wages Protection	Mrs Jennie Chor