



*Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Los Angeles, Southern California and Hawaii*

## SAINT DEMIANA COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

*Physical Address*  
9692 Via Excelencia  
San Diego, California 92126

*Mailing Address*  
P.O. Box 604  
Solana Beach, California 92075

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### ΚΥΡΗ ΘΕΩ ΙΕΡΑΡΧΟΣ

#### I. General Responsibilities of a Deacon

1. Absolutely must have a father of confession and practice confession at least once a month.
2. Must spiritually prepare himself before partaking of Holy Communion: *“Sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice”* (1 Samuel 16:5).
3. Must receive Holy Communion every liturgy in which he participates, unless otherwise arranged with father of confession.
4. Should attend at least one liturgy per week.
5. Should never smoke or consume alcohol.
6. Should not swear, lie, or gossip, that God may accept his service in prayer. *“Out of the same mouth should not proceed blessing and cursing”* ( James 3:10).
7. On the way to church, must recite Psalms 121, 26:4-5, 64:4, 83, 5:7, and 122.
8. Upon entering the church, must kneel in front of the Holy Altar.
9. Recite Psalms 29 and 92 when putting on the tunic.
10. Recite Psalm 47 when taking off the tunic.
11. Should always acknowledge the holiness of the church: *“Holiness adorns Your house, O Lord, forever”* (Psalms 93:5); *“For My House shall be called a house of prayer for all nations”* (Isaiah 56:7); and *“How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!”* (Genesis 28:17).
12. Be decent in the church, as St. Paul said, *“Let all things be done decently and in order”* (1 Corinthians 14:40).
13. During the reading of the Holy Gospel, must stand still. If you enter the church during the reading, stop wherever you are in reverence.
14. Treat other deacons with love and carry their weaknesses.
15. Avoid talking during any service for any reason.



16. Be in harmony when chanting congregation hymns without arbitrarily changing them.
17. Must never enter the bathroom or other facilities in the church while wearing his tunic.
18. Must sign himself properly from the head.
19. Organize the books after using them and generally keep the church clean.
20. Older deacons must teach younger deacons how to behave during the liturgy.
21. After the liturgy, treat your tunic with respect, either folding it or hanging it neatly.
22. Must exhibit total obedience without questioning during the service.
23. Must make every effort to learn all of the hymns of the church so that we may preserve the tradition handed down to us and praise God in one spirit.
24. Must make every effort to learn the Coptic language.
25. Must strive to know the church rules and traditions.
26. Every deacon must know his responsibilities in the service.
27. Should be involved in other church services.
28. Entering the Holy Altar should be done from the side doors, not from the main door, which is reserved for the King of Kings, unless you are carrying the Annunciation Gospel (the silver Gospel). The Holy Gospel must always enter through the main door.
29. Deacons should not wear any tunics that have pictures of saints on them. This is not part of our church's tradition. Our bishop has expressly banned this.

## II. Specific Responsibilities of Deacons Serving in the Holy Altar

1. Deacons serving inside the altar should come before the Morning Raising of Incense, not after. If you arrive and find the priest already at church, you are late.
2. Do not enter the Holy Altar unless you are asked by one of the clergy.
3. If the priest is praying in Coptic, respond in Coptic only. If the priest is praying in Arabic, respond in Arabic only. If the priest is praying in English, respond in English only. **No exceptions.**
4. Avoid talking for any reason.
5. Do not chant the congregation responses if you are serving in the Holy Altar. Our bishop has spoken against this many times.