



Anglican Catholic Church



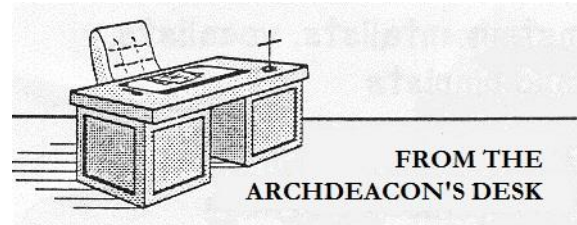
## Diocese of the United Kingdom

Catholic Faith † Orthodox Worship † Apostolic Order

November 2015

*My dear friends and colleagues,*

Everybody knows about Facebook. A couple of years ago there was a group on it called 'Keep Christmas out of Advent' which tried to do just that. It seems to have gone now, but it was there, I suspect, both to draw together Christians who are simply sick and tired of the ever-encroaching presence of all things Christmassy into the season of Advent, as well as to do its bit – in however small a way it might be – to spread this message in those churches which are fast in danger of losing the significance of Advent. As I see it, one of the outcomes of the erosion of Advent – by, amongst other things, the continual presence and earliness in December (and November) of Christmas fairs, Christmas trees, carol services and the like – is that the secular Christmas takes over and fills the Advent-sized gap with much of the nonsense some people allow to take place in their churches. Well, who's seriously going to be interested in bothering with a traditional Advent Jesse Tree if the Christmas Tree, arrayed in many of its secular ornaments, is already up by the second Sunday in Advent?



As my family know only too well, I'm irritated by the adverts I've been seeing since October on television and on the high street, by illuminations and Christmas offers and by Christmas decorations which go up in peoples' homes around me soon after "Hallowe'en". So what does the secular Christmas really have to offer? What lasting joy do people get out of it, other than a few extra pounds in weight and considerably fewer pounds in their wallets? Are people really taken in by actors in television scenes of happy families, of prosperity and snow-covered shopping centres where Christmas is shown to be all about people buying presents and vast quantities of food and alcohol? This isn't the Message of the angels. It's something designed to get us to part with our money or load it onto a credit card and pay for it for the next 12 months! And it can also be spiritually dangerous, because it tempts us to forget about the lonely, the poor, the marginalised, the depressed, those without homes or families and those for whom the pressures of the sort of false, materialistic Christmas we see on television are just too much.

For Christians, Christmas is one of the most holy times of the year. We may enjoy (or endure) all the good things the season offers us – the decorations, the crackers, the dinners and the repeats of The Grinch or The Sound of Music on the telly – but we offer something much more than the high street. We offer – in the person of Jesus Christ, whose birth we prepare for in Advent and celebrate at Christmas – salvation, hope and a life lived in his love, free from fear and anxiety. God is with us in Christ. He is the Word made Flesh and the splendour of the Father. Come, let us adore him! But only, please, when we've given ourselves time to watch and wait for his coming to us both in his holy Incarnation and again at his Second Coming.

With every blessing

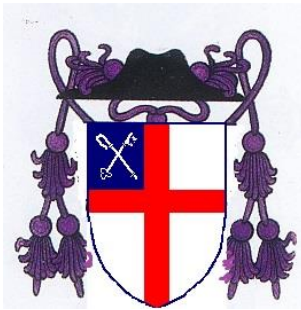
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## What is an Archdeacon's function in the DUK?

One very important task of an archdeacon is to support the Bishop as Chief Shepherd, Pastor and Minister of the diocese, and to work closely with him as a friend and critic, sharing a common vision for the diocese and complementing his gifts in areas of pastoral care and support of clergy and their families, training and resourcing of the Church, and developing mission and ministry in the diocese. He will also be expected to assist the Bishop with the development, introduction, monitoring and evaluation of Diocesan policies and procedures.

He should represent the Bishop at events as requested. He may also participate in Diocesan appointment procedures. The archdeacon may well be the first person the clergy contact with any difficulties, should they prefer not to contact the Bishop directly.

The support and encouragement of the work of the Regional Deans is another of the tasks of the archdeacon, thereby ensuring that the Deans are aware of new or changing developments within the Diocese and archdeaconry and supporting them in their implementation. The archdeacon should work closely with the Deans in training, supporting and maintaining pastoral care of clergy. He may assist the Bishop in the appointment of Regional Deans.

In the parishes the archdeacon's job is to help ensure that Provincial and Diocesan Canons are complied with, to undertake the functions and administration associated with Visitations, admitting new members of the Church on behalf of the Bishop if requested, and ensuring the maintenance and updating of inventories and registers. He is also available to advise clergy and laity on matters concerning the care and maintenance of the church or worship area, vestry, vestments and ornaments. He will also advise on liturgical matters and protocol.

The archdeacon assists the Bishop where possible during periods of clergy incapacity. He will assist, advise and support the Bishop and clergy on disciplinary matters, and on matters of ongoing ministerial development through training and mentoring.

He will participate in parish ministry, festivals, etc., as far as is practicable.

Provincial Canon §6.5.03 states:

“Canonical Visitation of Others for the Bishop. If the Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese or other Jurisdiction does not make a Canonical Visitation to every Parish, Congregation, or Mission in person within his Jurisdiction each year, then the Archdeacon, or Regional or Rural Dean, or other such Commissary duly appointed by him, shall do so for him in those places not canonically visited by the Bishop Ordinary himself that year and shall prepare a written report for that Bishop in all details and on the state of the persons, places, and things so visited.”

When the archdeacon conducts a Visitation he will inspect and sign the registers and records, which should be available for this purpose. The Bishop and the Archdeacon will note the cleanliness of the worship space, whether the altar linens, purificators, corporal, etc., are clean and well ironed, or crumpled and stained, and whether the chalice and paten are bright and shiny or dull and tarnished. All these items need to be fit for their purpose as receptacles for the body and blood of Christ.

Next time I will write about the protocol which pertains to the Diocesan Bishop when he visits, and upon greeting him. Should there be any questions or queries about any procedures or matters, whether mentioned here or not, please do contact me and I will be pleased to shed some light if I can.

*Christ was content with a stable when he was born so that we could have a mansion when we die. – Source Unknown.*