

The Cross of the Order of Deaconesses

# Women of the Church

VOCATION IS NOT WHAT YOU  
WANT TO DO FOR A LIVING

BUT

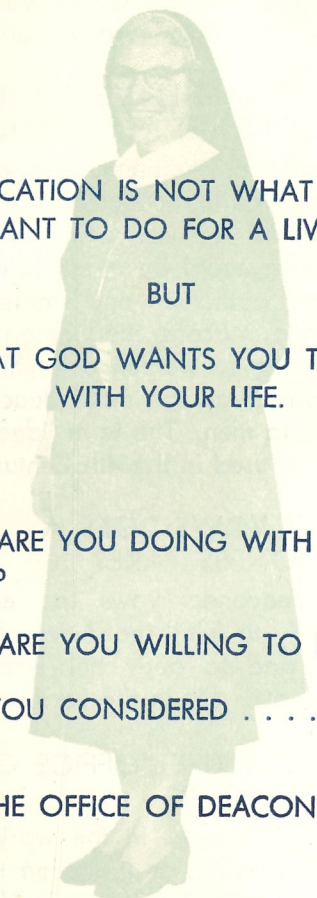
WHAT GOD WANTS YOU TO DO  
WITH YOUR LIFE.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH YOUR  
LIFE?

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO?

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED . . . . .

THE OFFICE OF DEACONESS



**1. WHAT IS A DEACONESS?**

A deaconess is a woman dedicated to life-long service in the Church and "set apart" by the laying-on-of-hands by the Bishop.

**2. WHAT DOES THE WORD "DEACONESS" MEAN?**

It stems from the Greek word "dia-konos," meaning literally "servant."

**3. HOW LONG HAVE THERE BEEN DEACONESSSES IN THE CHURCH?**

From apostolic times. The service of women was a recognized part of the ministry of the early Church. Whilst only men could be made priests and bishops, both men and women could be made deacons; the woman deacon ministering to women and children in the same way the male deacon ministered to men. The term "deaconess" was first used in the 4th Century.

**4. WHAT VOWS DOES A DEACONESS TAKE?**

A deaconess vows to "endeavor faithfully to fulfill the duties of her office," and to obey her Bishop and "those over her in the Lord."

**5. WHAT IS THE "OFFICE OF DEACONESS"?**

It is "to assist in the work of the Parish, Mission, or Institution to which she may be appointed under the direction of the Rector or Priest-in-charge; or if there be none such, to perform such functions as may be directly entrusted to her by her Bishop."

**6. DOES A DEACONESS WEAR A DISTINCTIVE DRESS?**

A deaconess customarily wears a simple religious garb, or habit with the silver cross of the Order which identifies her as a servant of Christ and His Church, and opens many doors and hearts to her ministry.

**7. HOW DOES ONE ADDRESS A DEACONESS?**

A deaconess is addressed simply as "Deaconess," with or without her surname.

**8. DO DEACONESSSES LIVE IN COMMUNITY?**

They sometimes live with a group of deaconesses or other women doing the same work. Often they live alone in or near the area of their work, depending entirely upon circumstances. Deaconesses earn their own living and arrange their own mode of life.

**9. WHAT STEPS DOES ONE TAKE TO BECOME A DEACONESS?**

One must apply to her Bishop and be accepted as a candidate, and must satisfy him by letters of recommendation as to her character and fitness for the Office. The Central House for Deaconesses offers a course of training in preparation, and testing of one's vocation.

**10. WHO MAY BECOME A DEACONESS?**

According to the Canon "Of Deaconesses," "A woman of devout character and proved fitness, unmarried or widowed." The call to be a deaconess may come to those just out of college or university; to the mature woman of experience in the field of education, business, nursing, social welfare or parish work.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION  
WRITE TO:

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GOD MAY BE CALLING YOU  
TO SERVE HIM IN HIS CHURCH  
and THROUGH HIS CHURCH  
AS A DEACONESS