

Extracts Regarding Deaconess
from
The Ante-Nicene Fathers
Volumes 1 – 7

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There are no substantive references to “Deaconess” in Volumes 1 3, and 5-6. Most references are found in Volume 7, “The Constitutions of the Holy Apostles”.

Pseudo-Ignatius Salutes Deaconesses

SALUTATIONS¹

I salute the holy presbytery. I salute the sacred deacons, and that person most dear to me, whom may I behold, through the Holy Spirit, occupying my place when I shall attain to Christ. My soul be in place of his. I salute the sub-deacons, the readers, the singers, the doorkeepers, the laborers, the exorcists, the confessors. **I salute** the keepers of the holy gates, **the deaconesses in Christ**. I salute the virgins betrothed to Christ, of whom may I have joy in the Lord Jesus. I

¹ “Salutations”, in “The Epistle of Ignatius to the Antiochians”, Chapter 12 (Pages 216-217). Contained in *Spurious Epistles of Ignatius*”, collected in “The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus; American Edition”, edited by A. Cleveland Coxe. The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson. The Master Christian Library, Version 5, AGES Software (1997). {Coxe, page 205: In the Epistle to the Antiochians there is an enumeration of various Church officers, who were certainly unknown at the period when Ignatius lived.}

salute the people of the Lord, from the smallest to the greatest, and all my sisters in the Lord.

Reference to Women in Ecclesiastical Orders

EXAMPLES FROM AMONG THE HEATHEN, AS WELL AS FROM THE CHURCH, TO ENFORCE THE FOREGOING EXHORTATION²

How many men, therefore, and **how many women, in Ecclesiastical Orders**, owe their position to continence, who have preferred to be wedded to God; who have restored the honor of their flesh, and who have already dedicated themselves as sons of that (future) age, by slaying in themselves the concupiscence of lust, and that whole (propensity) which could not be admitted within Paradise! Whence it is presumable that such as shall wish to be received within Paradise, ought at last to begin to cease from that thing from which Paradise is intact.

Editor's Note on Tertullian Reference to Women in Ecclesiastical Orders

ELUCIDATION³

(ALBEIT THEY BE LAICS {Layity}, CHAP 7)

IN the tract on *Baptism* Tertullian uses language implying that three persons compose a Church. But here we find it much more strongly pronounced, — *Ubi tres, Ecclesia est, licet Laici*. The question of lay-baptism we may leave till we come to Cyprian, only noting here, that, while Cyprian abjures his “master” on this point, his adversary, the Bishop of Rome, adopts Tertullian’s principle in so far. But, in view of Matthew 18:20, surely we may all allow that three are a *quorum* when so “gathered together in Christ’s name,” albeit not for all purposes. Three women may claim the Savior’s promise when lawfully met together for social devotions, nor can it be denied that they have a share in the priesthood of the “peculiar people.” So, too, even of three pious children. But it does not follow that they are a church for all *purposes*, — preaching, celebrating sacraments, ordaining, and the like. The late Dean Stanley was fond of this passage of Tertullian, but obviously it might be abused to encourage a state of things which all orderly and organized systems of religion must necessarily discard? **In chapter 13 there is a reference, apparently, to *deaconesses* as “women in Ecclesiastical Orders.”**

² Tertullian, “Examples from Among the Heathen, as Well as from the Church, to enforce the foregoing Exhortation”, Chapter 13 in “Tertullian, Part Fourth, 5. On Exhortation to Chastity,” (Pages 116 – 117), translated by Rev. S. Thelwall, contained in *Fathers of the Third Century, American Edition*; by A. Cleveland Coxe, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 4, edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson. The Master Christian Library, Version 5, AGES Software (1997).

³ Thelwall, “Elucidation” on Tertullian, Part Fourth, 5. On Exhortation to Chastity,” (Page 117), translated by Rev. S. Thelwall, contained in *Fathers of the Third Century, American Edition*; by A. Cleveland Coxe, The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 4, edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson. The Master Christian Library, Version 5, AGES Software (1997).

Deaconess Classified as Laity, Separate from Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons
XXV. OF FIRST-FRUITES AND TITHES, AND AFTER WHAT MANNER THE BISHOP IS HIMSELF TO PARTAKE OF THEM, OR TO DISTRIBUTE THEM TO OTHERS⁴

Hear this, you of the laity also, the elect Church of God. For the people were formerly called “the people of God,” and “an holy nation.” You, therefore, are the holy and sacred “Church of God, enrolled in heaven, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people,” a bride adorned for the Lord God, a great Church, a faithful Church. Hear attentively now what was said formerly: oblations and tithes belong to Christ our High Priest, and to those who minister to Him. Tenths of salvation are the first letter of the name of Jesus. Hear, O thou Holy Catholic Church, who hast escaped the ten plagues, and hast received the ten commandments, and hast learned the law, and hast kept the faith, and hast believed in Jesus, and hast known the decalogue, and hast believed in the iota which is the first letter of the name of Jesus, and art named after His name, and art established, and shinest in the consummation of His glory. Those which were then the sacrifices now are prayers, and intercessions, and thanksgivings. Those which were then first-fruits, and tithes, and offerings, and gifts, now are oblations, which are presented by holy bishops to the Lord God, through Jesus Christ, who has died for them. For these are your high priests, as the presbyters are your priests, and your present deacons instead of your Levites; as are also your readers, your singers, your porters, your deaconesses, your widows, your virgins, and your orphans: but He who is above all these is the High Priest.

Women to have Deaconess Present to Talk with Bishop or Deacon

ACCORDING TO WHAT PATTERNS AND DIGNITY EVERY ORDER OF THE CLERGY IS APPOINTED BY GOD⁵

XXVI. The bishop, he is the minister of the word, the keeper of knowledge, the mediator between God and you in the several parts of your divine worship. He is the teacher of piety; and, next after God, he is your father, who has begotten you again to the adoption of sons by water and the Spirit. He is your ruler and governor; he is your king and potentate; he is, next after God, your earthly God, who has a right to be honored by you. For concerning him, and such as he, it is that God pronounces, “I have said, Ye are gods; and ye are all children of the

⁴ Tertullian, last paragraph of XXV: “Of First-Fruits and Tithes, and After What Manner the Bishop is Himself to Partake of Them, or to Distribute Them to Others” (Page 812), in Section 4: “On the Management of the Resources Collected for the Support of the Clergy, and the Relief of the Poor”, contained in Book 2: “Of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons”, of *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, edited by James Donaldson, contained in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7*, edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson. The Master Christian Library, Version 5, AGES Software (1997).

⁵ Tertullian, XXVI: “According to What Patterns and Dignity Every Order of the Clergy is Appointed by God” (Pages 812-813), in Section 4: “On the Management of the Resources Collected for the Support of the Clergy, and the Relief of the Poor”, contained in Book 2: “Of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons”, of *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, edited by James Donaldson, contained in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7*, edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson. The Master Christian Library, Version 5, AGES Software (1997).

Most High.” And, “Ye shall not speak evil of the gods.” For let the bishop preside over you as one honored with the authority of God, which he is to exercise over the clergy, and by which he is to govern all the people. But let the deacon minister to him, as Christ does to His Father; and let him serve him unblameably in all things, as Christ does nothing of Himself, but does always those things that please His Father. **Let also the deaconess be honored by you in the place of the Holy Ghost, and not do or say anything without the deacon;** as neither does the Comforter say or do anything of Himself, but gives glory to Christ by waiting for His pleasure. And as we cannot believe on Christ without the teaching of the Spirit, so **let not any woman address herself to the deacon or bishop without the deaconess.** Let the presbyters be esteemed by you to represent us the apostles, and let them be the teachers of divine knowledge; since our Lord, when He sent us, said, “Go ye, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” Let the widows and orphans be esteemed as representing the altar of burnt-offering; and let the virgins be honored as representing the altar of incense, and the incense itself.

Deaconess to Maintain Order Among Women in Church

LVII. ON ASSEMBLING IN THE CHURCH⁶

An exact description of a church and the clergy, and what things in particular every one is to do in the solemn assemblies of the clergy and laity for, religious worship.

But be thou, O bishop, holy, unblameable, no striker, not soon angry, not cruel; but a builder up, a converter, apt to teach, forbearing of evil, of a gentle mind, meek, long-suffering, ready to exhort, ready to comfort, as a man of God. When thou callest an assembly of the Church as one that is the commander of a great ship, appoint the assemblies to be made with all possible skill, charging the deacons as mariners to prepare places for the brethren as for passengers, with all due care and decency. And first, let the building be long, with its head to the east, with its vestries on both sides at the east end, and so it will be like a ship. In the middle let the bishop's throne be placed, and on each side of him let the presbytery sit down; and let the deacons stand near at hand, in close and small girt garments, for they are like the mariners and managers of the ship: with regard to these, let the laity sit on the other side, with all quietness and good order. **And let the women sit by themselves, they also keeping silence.** In the middle, let the reader stand upon some high place: let him read the books of Moses, of Joshua the son of Nun, of the Judges, and of the Kings and of the

⁶ LVII: “On Assembling in the Church” (Pages 836-838), in Section 7 of Book 2: “Of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons”, of *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, edited by James Donaldson, contained in The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson. The Master Christian Library, Version 5, AGES Software (1997).

Chronicles, and those written after the return from the captivity; and besides these, the books of Job and of Solomon, and of the sixteen prophets. But when there have been two lessons severally read, let some other person sing the hymns of David, and let the people join at the conclusions of the verses. Afterwards let our Acts be read, and the Epistles of Paul our fellow-worker, which he sent to the churches under the conduct of the Holy Spirit; and afterwards let a deacon or a presbyter read the Gospels, both those which I Matthew and John have delivered to you, and those which the fellow-workers of Paul received and left to you, Luke and Mark. And while the Gospel is read, let all the presbyters and deacons, and all the people, stand up in great silence; for it is written: "Be silent, and hear, O Israel." And again: "But do thou stand there, and hear." In the next place, let the presbyters one by one, not all together, exhort the people, and the bishop in the last place, as being the commander. **Let the porters stand at the entries of the men, and observe them. Let the deaconesses also stand at those of the women, like shipmen.** For the same description and pattern was both in the tabernacle of the testimony and in the temple of God. But if any one be found sitting out of his place, let him be rebuked by the deacon, as a manager of the foreship, and be removed into the place proper for him; for the Church is not only like a ship, but also like a sheepfold. For as the shepherds place all the brute creatures distinctly, I mean goats and sheep, according to their kind and age, and still every one runs together, like to his like; so is it to be in the Church. Let the young persons sit by themselves, if there be a place for them; if not, let them stand upright. But let those that are already stricken in years sit in order. For the children which stand, let their fathers and mothers take them to them. Let the younger women also sit by themselves, if there be a place for them; but if there be not, let them stand behind the women. Let those women which are married, and have children, be placed by themselves; but let the virgins, and the widows, and the elder women, stand or sit before all the rest; and let the deacon be the disposer of the places, that every one of those that comes in may go to his proper place, and may not sit at the entrance. In like manner, let the deacon oversee the people, that nobody may whisper, nor slumber, nor laugh, nor nod; for all ought in the church to stand wisely, and soberly, and attentively, having their attention fixed upon the word of the Lord. After this, let all rise up with one consent, and looking towards the east, after the catechumens and penitents are gone out, pray to God eastward, who ascended up to the heaven of heavens to the east; remembering also the ancient situation of paradise in the east, from whence the first man, when he had yielded to the persuasion of the serpent, and disobeyed the command of God, was expelled. As to the deacons, after the prayer is over, let some of them attend upon the oblation of the Eucharist, ministering to the Lord's body with fear. Let others of them watch the multitude, and keep them silent. But let that deacon who is at the high priest's hand say to the people, Let no one have any quarrel against another; let no one come in hypocrisy. Then let the men give the men, and the women give the women, the Lord's kiss. But let no one do it with deceit,

as Judas betrayed the Lord with a kiss. After this let the deacon pray for the whole Church, for the whole world, and the several parts of it, and the fruits of it; for the priests and the rulers, for the high priest and the king, and the peace of the universe. After this let the high priest pray for peace upon the people, and bless them, as Moses commanded the priests to bless the people, in these words: “The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and give thee peace.” Let the bishop pray for the people, and say: “Save Thy people, O Lord, and bless Thine inheritance, which Thou hast obtained with the precious blood of Thy Christ, and hast called a royal priesthood, and an holy nation.” After this let the sacrifice follow, the people standing, and praying silently; and when the oblation has been made, let every rank by itself partake of the Lord’s body and precious blood in order, and approach with reverence and holy fear, as to the body of their king. Let the women approach with their heads covered, as is becoming the order of women; but let the door be watched, lest any unbeliever, or one not yet initiated, come in.

Deaconess to be Usher for Women

LVIII. OF COMMENDATORY LETTERS IN FAVOR OF STRANGERS, LAY PERSONS, CLERGYMEN, AND BISHOPS; AND THAT THOSE WHO COME INTO THE CHURCH ASSEMBLIES ARE TO BE RECEIVED WITHOUT REGARD TO THEIR QUALITY⁷

Nay, if a poor man, or one of a mean family, or a stranger, comes upon you, whether he be old or young, and there be no place, the deacon shall find a place for even these, and that with all his heart; that, instead of accepting persons before men, his ministration towards God may be well-pleasing. **The very same thing let the deaconess do to those women, whether poor or rich, that come unto them.**

Widows to Obey Bishop, Presbyter, Deacons and Deaconesses

VII. WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERS OF WIDOWS FALSELY SO CALLED⁸

The widows therefore ought to be grave, obedient to their bishops, and their presbyters, and their deacons, and besides these to the deaconesses, with piety, reverence, and fear; not usurping authority, nor desiring to do anything beyond the constitution without the consent of the deacon.

⁷ LVIII: “Of Commendatory Letters in Favor of Strangers, Lay Persons, Clergymen, and Bishops; and that Those Who Come Into the Church Assemblies are to be Received Without Regard to Their Quality” (Pages 838-839), in Section 7 of Book 2: “Of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons”, of *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, edited by James Donaldson, contained in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7*, edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson. The Master Christian Library, Version 5, AGES Software (1997).

⁸ VII: “What are the Characters of Widows Falsely So Called” (Page 851), in Section 1 of Book 3, of *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, edited by James Donaldson, contained in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7*, edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson. The Master Christian Library, Version 5, AGES Software (1997).

Only a Bishop may Ordain a Deaconess

XI. THAT NONE BUT A BISHOP AND PRESBYTER, NONE EVEN OF THE INFERIOR RANKS OF THE CLERGY, ARE PERMITTED TO DO THE OFFICES OF THE PRIESTS; THAT ORDINATION BELONGS WHOLLY TO THE BISHOP, AND TO NOBODY ELSE⁹

Nay, further, we do not permit to the rest of the clergy to baptize, — as, for instance, neither to readers, nor singers, nor porters, nor ministers, — but to the bishops and presbyters alone, yet so that the deacons are to minister to them therein. But those who venture upon it shall undergo the punishment of the companions of Corah. We do not permit presbyters to ordain deacons, **or deaconesses**, or readers, or ministers, or singers, or porters, but only bishops; for this is the ecclesiastical order and harmony.

Deaconess to Not Proclaim Her Good Works

XIV. THAT SHE WHO HAS BEEN KIND TO THE POOR OUGHT NOT TO MAKE A STIR AND TELL ABROAD HER NAME, ACCORDING TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE LORD¹⁰

But if any woman has been good, let her, as a prudent person, conceal her own name, not sounding a trumpet before her, that her alms may be with God in secret, as the Lord says: “Thou, when thou doest thine alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand cloth, that thine alms may be in secret.” And let the widow pray for him that gave her the alms, whosoever he be, as being the holy altar of Christ; and “the Father, who seeth in secret, will render to him that did good openly.” But those widows which will not live according to the command of God, are solicitous and inquisitive **what deaconess it is that gives the charity**, and what widows receive it. And when she has learned those things, she murmurs **at the deaconess who distributed the charity**, saying, Dost not thou see that I am in more distress, and want of thy charity? Why, therefore, hast thou preferred her before me? She says these things foolishly, not understanding that this does not depend on the will of man, but the appointment of God. For if she is herself a witness that she was nearer, and, upon inquiry, was in greater want, and more naked than the other, she ought to understand who it is that made this constitution, and to hold her peace, and not to murmur at the deaconess who distributed the charity, but to enter into her own house, and to cast herself prostrate on her face to make supplication to God that her sin may be forgiven

⁹ XI: “That None but a Bishop and Presbyter, None Even of the Inferior Ranks of the Clergy, are Permitted to do the Offices of the Priests; That Ordination Belongs Wholly to the Bishop, and to Nobody Else” (Pages 853-854), in Section 1 of Book 3, of *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, edited by James Donaldson, contained in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7*, edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson. The Master Christian Library, Version 5, AGES Software (1997).

¹⁰ XIV: “That She Who has Been Kind to the Poor Ought Not to Make a Stir and Tell Abroad Her Name, According to the Constitution of the Lord” (Page 855), in Section 1 of Book 3, of *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, edited by James Donaldson, contained in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7*, edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson. The Master Christian Library, Version 5, AGES Software (1997).

her. For God commanded the deaconess who brought the charity not to proclaim the same, and this widow murmured because she did not publish her name, that so she might know it, and run to receive; nay, did not only murmur, but also cursed her, forgetting Him that said: “He that blesseth thee is blessed, and he that curseth thee is cursed.” But the Lord says: “When ye enter into an house, say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it; but if it be not worthy, your peace shall return to you.”

Role of Deaconess in Baptism of Women to Preserve Modesty

ON DEACONS AND DEACONESSSES, THE REST OF THE CLERGY, AND ON BAPTISM¹¹

Let not therefore either a bishop, or a presbyter, or a deacon, or any one else of the sacerdotal catalogue, defile his tongue with calumny, lest he inherit a curse instead of a blessing; and let it also be the bishop's business and care that no lay person utter any curse: for he ought to take care of all, — of the clergy, of the virgins, of the widows, of the laity. For which reason, O bishop, do thou ordain thy fellow-workers, the laborers for life and for righteousness, such deacons as are pleasing to God, such whom thou provest to be worthy among all the people, and such as shall be ready for the necessities of their ministration. Ordain also a deaconess who is faithful and holy, for the ministrations towards women. For sometimes he cannot send a deacon, who is a man, to the women, on account of unbelievers. Thou shalt therefore send a woman, a deaconess, on account of the imaginations of the bad. For we stand in need of a woman, a deaconess, for many necessities; and first in the baptism of women, the deacon shall anoint only their forehead with the holy oil, and after him the deaconess shall anoint them: for there is no necessity that the women should be seen by the men; but only in the laying on of hands the bishop shall anoint her head, as the priests and kings were formerly anointed, not because those which are now baptized are ordained priests, but as being Christians, or anointed, from Christ the Anointed, “a royal priesthood, and an holy nation, the Church of God, the pillar and ground of the marriage-chamber,” who formerly were not a people, but now are beloved and chosen, upon whom is called His new name? as Isaiah the prophet witnesses, saying: “And they shall Call the people by His new name, which the Lord shall name for them.”

Deaconess to Receive a Woman After Being Dipped in Water for Baptism

XVI. CONCERNING THE SACRED INITIATION OF HOLY BAPTISM¹²

¹¹ “On Deacons and Deaconesses, the Rest of the Clergy, and on Baptism” (Pages 856-857), in Section 2 of Book 3, of *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, edited by James Donaldson, contained in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7*, edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson. The Master Christian Library, Version 5, AGES Software (1997).

¹² XVI: “Concerning the Sacred Initiation of Holy Baptism” (Page 857), in Section 2 of Book 3, of *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, edited by James Donaldson, contained in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*.

Thou therefore, O bishop, according to that type, shalt anoint the head of those that are to be baptized, whether they be men or women, with the holy oil, for a type of the spiritual baptism. After that, either thou, O bishop, or a presbyter that is under thee, shall in the solemn form name over them the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit, and shall dip them in the water; **and let a deacon receive the man, and a deaconess the woman**, that so the conferring of this inviolable seal may take place with a becoming decency. And after that, let the bishop anoint those that are baptized with ointment.

Deaconess to Care for Women of Church

XIX. WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERS OF A DEACON¹³

Let the deacons be in all things unspotted, as the bishop himself is to be, only more active; in number according to the largeness of the Church, that they may minister to the infirm as workmen that are not ashamed. **And let the deaconess be diligent in taking care of the women**; but both of them ready to carry messages, to travel about, to minister, and to serve, as spake Isaiah concerning the Lord, saying: “To justify the righteous, who serves many faithfully.”

Deaconess to be Virgin or Widow Married Only Once

XVII. MATRIMONIAL PRECEPTS CONCERNING CLERGYMEN¹⁴

We have already said, that a bishop, a presbyter, and a deacon, when they are constituted, must be but once married, whether their wives be alive or whether they be dead; and that it is not lawful for them, if they are unmarried when they are ordained, to be married afterwards; or if they be then married, to marry a second time, but to be content with that wife. which they had when they came to ordination. We also appoint that the ministers, and singers, and readers, and porters, shall be only once married. But if they entered into the clergy before they were married, we permit them to marry, if they have an inclination thereto, lest they sin and incur punishment. But we do not permit any one of the clergy to take to wife either a courtesan, or a servant, or a widow, or one that is divorced, as also the law says. **Let the deaconess be a pure virgin; or, at the least, a widow who has been but once married, faithful, and well esteemed.**

Volume 7, edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson. The Master Christian Library, Version 5, AGES Software (1997).

¹³ XIX: “What are the Characters of a Deacon” (Page 858), in Section 2 of Book 3, of *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, edited by James Donaldson, contained in The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson. The Master Christian Library, Version 5, AGES Software (1997).

¹⁴ XVII: “Matrimonial Precepts Concerning Clergymen” (Pages 908-909), in Section 3 of Book 6, of *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, edited by James Donaldson, contained in The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson. The Master Christian Library, Version 5, AGES Software (1997).

Deaconesses are the First of the Women to Receive Holy Communion

XIII. THE BIDDING PRAYER FOR THE FAITHFUL AFTER THE DIVINE OBLATION¹⁵

And let the bishop speak thus to the people: Holy things for holy persons. And let the people answer: There is One that is holy; there is one Lord, one Jesus Christ, blessed for ever, to the glory of God the Father. Amen. “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill among men. Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord,” being the Lord God who appeared to us, “Hosanna in the highest.” And after that, let the bishop partake, then the presbyters, and deacons, and sub-deacons, and the readers, and the singers, and the ascetics; **and then of the women, the deaconesses, and the virgins, and the widows; then the children;** and then all the people in order, with reverence and godly fear, without tumult. And let the bishop give the oblation, saying, The body of Christ; and let him that receiveth say, Amen. And let the deacon take the cup; and when he gives it, say, The blood of Christ, the cup of life; and let him that drinketh say, Amen. And let the thirty-third psalm be said, while the rest are partaking; and when all, both men and women, have partaken, let the deacons carry what remains into the vestry.

Rubric for Ordaining a Deaconess

XIX. CONCERNING THE DEACONESS —THE CONSTITUTION OF BARTHOLOMEW¹⁶

Concerning a deaconess, I Bartholomew make this constitution: **O bishop, thou shalt lay thy hands upon her in the presence of the presbytery, and of the deacons and deaconesses**, and shall say: —

Prayer for Ordination of a Deaconess

XX. THE FORM OF PRAYER FOR THE ORDINATION OF A DEACONESS¹⁷

O Eternal God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Creator of man and of woman, who didst replenish with the Spirit Miriam, and Deborah, and Anna, and Huldah; who didst not disdain that Thy only begotten Son should be born of a woman; who also in the tabernacle of the testimony, and in the temple, **didst ordain women to be keepers of Thy holy gates**, — do Thou now also look down

¹⁵ XIII: “The Bidding Prayer for the Faithful After the Divine Oblation” (Page 977), in Section 2 of Book 8: “Concerning Gifts, and Ordinations, and the Ecclesiastical Canons”, of *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, edited by James Donaldson, contained in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7*, edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson. The Master Christian Library, Version 5, AGES Software (1997).

¹⁶ XIX: “Concerning the Deaconess – The Constitution of Bartholomew” (Page 981), in Section 3 of Book 8: “Concerning Gifts, and Ordinations, and the Ecclesiastical Canons”, of *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, edited by James Donaldson, contained in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7*, edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson. The Master Christian Library, Version 5, AGES Software (1997).

¹⁷ XX: “The Form of Prayer for the Ordination of a Deaconess” (Page 981), in Section 3 of Book 8: “Concerning Gifts, and Ordinations, and the Ecclesiastical Canons”, of *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, edited by James Donaldson, contained in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7*, edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson. The Master Christian Library, Version 5, AGES Software (1997).

upon this Thy servant, who is to be ordained to the office of a deaconess, and grant her Thy Holy Spirit, and “cleanse her from all filthiness of flesh and spirit,” that she may worthily discharge the work which is committed to her to Thy glory, and the praise of Thy Christ, with whom glory and adoration be to Thee and the Holy Spirit for ever. Amen.

Sacramental Duties of Clergy, Including Deaconess

XXVIII. THE SAME APOSTLE’S CANONS CONCERNING BISHOPS, PRESBYTERS, DEACONS, AND THE REST OF THE CLERGY¹⁸

Concerning the canons I the same make a constitution. A bishop blesses, but does not receive the blessing. He lays on hands, ordains, offers, receives the blessing from bishops, but by no means from presbyters. A bishop deprives any clergyman who deserves deprivation, excepting a bishop; for of himself he has not power to do that. A presbyter blesses, but does not receive the blessing; yet does he receive the blessing from the bishop or a fellow-presbyter. In like manner does he give it to a fellow-presbyter. He lays on hands, but does not ordain; he does not deprive, yet does he separate those that are under him, if they be liable to such a punishment. A deacon does not bless, does not give the blessing, but receives it from the bishop and presbyter: he does not baptize, he does not offer; but when a bishop or presbyter has offered, he distributes to the people, not as a priest, but as one that ministers to the priests. But it is not lawful for any one of the other clergy to do the work of a deacon. **A deaconess does not bless, nor perform anything belonging to the office of presbyters or deacons, but only is to keep the doors, and to minister to the presbyters in the baptizing of women, on account of decency. A deacon separates a sub-deacon, a reader, a singer, and a deaconess, if there be any occasion, in the absence of a presbyter. It is not lawful for a sub-deacon to separate either one of the clergy or laity; nor for a reader, nor for a singer, nor for a deaconess, for they are the ministers to the deacons.**

Distribution of Collection Among Clergy, Including Deaconess

XXXI. THE SAME APOSTLE’S CONSTITUTIONS CONCERNING THE REMAINING OBLATIONS¹⁹

I the same make a constitution in regard to remainders. Those eulogies which remain at the mysteries, let the deacons distribute them among the clergy, according to the mind of the bishop or the presbyters: to a bishop; four parts; to a

¹⁸ XXVIII: “The Same Apostle’s Canons Concerning Bishops, Presbyters, Deacons, and the Rest of the Clergy” (Pages 983-984), in Section 3 of Book 8: “Concerning Gifts, and Ordinations, and the Ecclesiastical Canons”, of *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, edited by James Donaldson, contained in The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson. The Master Christian Library, Version 5, AGES Software (1997).

¹⁹ XXXI: “The Same Apostle’s Constitutions Concerning the Remaining Oblations” (Page 985), in Section 4 of Book 8: “Concerning Gifts, and Ordinations, and the Ecclesiastical Canons”, of *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, edited by James Donaldson, contained in The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson. The Master Christian Library, Version 5, AGES Software (1997).

presbyter, three parts; to a deacon, two parts; and to the rest of the sub-deacons, or readers, or singers, or **deaconesses, one part**. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God, that every one be honored according to his dignity; for the Church is the school, not of confusion, but of good order.