

Ancient and medieval liturgies document women were ordained as deacons by their bishops within the sanctuary during Mass, in the presence of the clergy through the imposition of hands by the invocation of the Holy Spirit; they self-communicated from the chalice; the bishop placed the stole around their necks. These women were called deacons. Deacons minister the *diakonia* of the Word, liturgy, and charity to the people of God.

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The Second Vatican Council restored the diaconate as a permanent vocation noting men already functioned as deacons and thus “it is only right to strengthen them by the imposition of hands that they may carry out their ministry more effectively because of the sacramental grace of the diaconate.” Many women function as deacons today. The diaconate is not the priesthood. Women can image the Risen Lord.

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