

Short Notice of New Reference Books

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Enchiridion sul Diaconato: Le Fonti e I Documenti Ufficiali Della Chiesa
edited by Enzo Petrolino
Libreria Editrice Vaticana
2009
572 pages, hardback
ISBN 978 88 209 7972 0
28 Euros

Nuovo Enchiridion sul Diaconato: Le Fonti e I Documenti Ufficiali Della Chiesa
edited by Enzo Petrolino
Libreria Editrice Vaticana
2016
1096 pages, hardback
ISBN 978 88 209 9807 3
30 Euros

Compendium on the Diaconate: A Resource for the Formation, Ministry, and Life
of Permanent Deacons
Edited by Enzo Petrolino
USCCB Communications
2015
581 pages, paperback
ISBN 978 1 60137 503 2
\$30

The first listed title above is not of course brand new, though it may be new to many deacons in the anglophone world. It is a labour of love edited by Deacon Enzo Petrolino, the President of the *Comunità del diaconato in Italia*, Italian Delegate to the International Diaconate Centre and author of *Il Concilio Vaticano II e Il Diaconato*, also published by Libreria Editrice Vaticano. He was assisted in the massive work of compilation by Fr Edmondo Caruana O' Carm, editorial director of Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

The volume is a valuable collection of texts fundamental for understanding the roots of the diaconate, of what is specific to this ministry, and of its potential for development in the contemporary Church, her pastoral care and the deacon's role in the re-evangelisation of Europe and the Americas. Bishops, theologians, those involved in the formation of deacons, as well as individual deacons themselves will find it a most useful resource.

So what do we have? The compendium begins from the Scriptural texts and is followed by the sources of the sub-Apostolic period, from Clement of Rome (circa 96), that great champion of the diaconate, Ignatius of Antioch (70-107), Polycarp of Smyrna (circa 69-155), Hermas (circa 140), the philosopher Justin (100-165), Irenaeus of Lyons (circa 130-circa 202). The third century Fathers starting with the School of Alexandria, Clement (150-215) and the great Origen (185-254) wrote about or preached on the diaconate. This division of the book is completed by chapters on the Latin Fathers from the third century, the Eastern Fathers of the fourth century, the Cappadocians, and the Latin Fathers on the fourth century, including Ambrose, the acerbic comments by Jerome and the voluminous references in Augustine. But by no means has all that St Augustine had to say about deacons been included. Whilst we could not expect complete

comprehensiveness, it is very disappointing that we have nothing from Gregory the Great, who knew well how to deploy his deacons (cf the three volumes of *The Letters of Gregory the Great* translated by John Martyn, published in 2004 by the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies in Toronto). Nor is any mention made of the Blessed Alcuin (735-804), “the most learned man of the age” according to the royal biographer, Einhard, in his life of Charlemagne, and undoubtedly the most learned deacon of all time.¹

There follow chapters on the canonical-liturgical literature, beginning with the first century *Didache*, on the third and fourth century Apocrypha, the diaconate in the Councils of the fourth century before going on to chapters on the diaconate in the documents of the Council of Trent and of the Second Vatican Council.

The Diaconate in Pontifical Magisterium is the title of the penultimate chapter which starts with Leo XIII and ends with most (but not all) of the addresses and homilies to deacons by Benedict XVI before his resignation. The final chapter includes all the documents of the Holy See that all of today’s deacons will already be familiar with, including the *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons* and the *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons*, the codes of Canon Law that make reference to deacons and the International Theological Commission’s research document on the diaconate. It is handy to have all these collected in a single volume. Finally, this 2009 Enchiridion includes a substantial appendix containing documents on the diaconate published by the Church in Italy.

If we take seriously the axiom first articulated by Prosper of Aquitaine that *legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi* then the most glaring omissions are the rites of ordination of deacons. It is after all on these that we base our theology of the diaconate or ought to do so.

So, this is all very fine and well if we can read Italian. What about those of us who cannot? I once harboured the ambition to collect, or make where necessary, English translations of all that Deacon Enzo had assembled, filling some gaps and ending with an appendix of the UK and US relevant official documents. I was very relieved to discover that USCCB Communications reached an agreement with Fr Caruana of LEV to produce a translation for the anglophone world, called *Compendium on the Diaconate: A Resource for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons*. This was completed last year in paperback format. For the most part it reproduces in English the contents, including the introductions by Enzo, of the 2009 Italian Enchiridion. Some of the translations of the introductory articles are imperfectly idiomatic. Naturally the Appendix includes the National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent in the United States instead of the Italian equivalent.

Amazingly, when almost two thousand deacons gathered in Rome for the Jubilee of Deacons in May this year (2016) we found a new edition of the Enchiridion by Enzo Petrolino in the bookshops. It is almost double the number of pages of the first edition and fills many of the gaps I noted in the first edition, especially the ordination rites. Besides the Latin (Roman) rite ordination prayers, there are the Ambrosian, Mozarabic, Coptic, Maronite, Byzantine rites for ordination.

The papal section is completed by the remaining addresses by Benedict XVI up to his resignation and then everything Pope Francis has uttered to or about deacons, before and after his election as Pope. Whatever one’s views about it, his discourse delivered to the International Union of General Superiors on 12th May is included as a further appendix at the very end of the book, after the index. This is truly remarkable given that this new edition was printed, published and being promoted in the bookshops twelve days later on 24th May! It would be good if someone were to identify and translate, or garner translations of, all the additional material in this new edition to be published as an English supplement to the USCCB Compendium. Any volunteers? Even better would be if USCCB Communications were to publish a second, updated, edition containing at least all the additional material the *Nuova Enchiridion* has included.

¹ Cf. *New Diaconal Review*, Issue 8, May 2012, p. 8.

