



# VIRTUAL ADULT EDUCATION

by Dr. Chuck Dickson



**IN MY DAY ONLY THE CLERGY SAID  
PRAYERS, READ SCRIPTURE, AND  
DISTRIBUTED COMMUNION**

**ALL WE HAD TO DO WAS SAY AN OCCASIONAL  
"AMEN"**



# Welcome

to OUR 50<sup>th</sup> VIRTUAL GSP class!

Today we  
talk about

the Episcopal clergy.



**ALL WE NEED  
TO KNOW  
ABOUT  
EPISCOPAL  
CLERGY**



**Presented by Charles E. Dickson, Ph.D.**

# PRAYERS FOR THE CLERGY AND PEOPLE

**Almighty and everlasting God,**  
from whom cometh every good and perfect gift:

Send down upon our bishops, and other clergy,  
and upon the congregations committed to their charge,  
the healthful Spirit of thy grace:

and,  
that they may truly please thee,  
pour upon them the continual dew of thy blessing.

Grant this,  
O Lord,  
for the honor of our Advocate and Mediator,  
Jesus Christ.

*Amen*

**I DON'T ALWAYS SEE EPISCOPAL  
CLERGY ON THE STREET**



**BUT WHEN I DO, THEY  
TELL ME I'M GOING TO DIE**

# HOW DO YOU TALK TO EPISCOPAL CLERGY?

**Clerical titles** can cause considerable confusion. This is particularly so when it comes to writing letters or verbally addressing Episcopal priests—who unfortunately cannot agree among themselves what they should be called. Some prefer Mr. or Ms., others Father or Mother with either their last or their first names. The only way to be sure of what they prefer is to ask them.

In our Diocese of Arizona, you are pretty safe addressing priests as either Mother or Father. In some more “protestant” dioceses, you may not be.

When referring to a person who is a cleric, you might ask, “Are you a priest?” Never ask if he or she is “a Reverend.” It is considered grammatically incorrect to refer in speech to a member of the Episcopal clergy as “Reverend” (as in “Reverend Doe”).

In written communication, the function word “the” always precedes Reverend. Only capitalize “The” in “The Reverend” when it begins a sentence or is part of the salutation of a letter; in the body of a sentence, always use a lower case “t.”

# HOW DO YOU TALK TO EPISCOPAL CLERGY?

Many priests are perfectly fine with adults addressing them by their Christian (given, first) name. Episcopal priests usually do not wish to be called *Reverend*, followed by a first or last name.

Some priests may wish to be called *Pastor*, followed by a first or last name. This is less frequent and more Lutheran than traditionally Episcopalian, but it does eliminate some confusion.

In many parishes, the priest may be referred to as *Father* (Fr.), followed by first or last name. Sometimes a female priest may adopt the title, *Mother* (Mtr.) followed by first or last name.

It is no longer usual to refer to an Episcopal priest by a secular title, such as *Mr*. It is likewise not usual to refer to a female Episcopal priest, in parish life, by a title that refers to her marital status: "Mrs.," "Ms," or "Miss."

# HOW DO YOU TALK TO EPISCOPAL CLERGY?

Anglicans are sometimes guilty of using names and titles, when referring to people and things, that are perhaps a bit too fancy, or maybe even unnecessarily obscure.

A good argument can be made for keeping things simple and not creating unnecessary layers of flowery and technical language when speaking about different roles for ministry in the Church. All baptized people are fellow members of a kinship of priests unto God, and that is all the title any of us need.

However, sometimes specialized terminology to name certain offices and roles in the Church can provide clarity and a greater understanding of what a person appointed to a ministry is being asked to do, as well as why, how, where, and with whom he/she is meant to do it.

An appropriate close in writing to any clergy person might be:

*Sincerely yours in Christ.*

# WHAT IS A PRIMATE?

**Primacy** is the status of being first, or presiding, among other bishops.

**Primates** are a diverse order of mammals which include lemurs, monkeys, apes, and humans. But it is also an ecclesiastical title for a bishop who has precedence over a number of other bishops. In the Early Church primacy was often accorded to the bishop of a chief city or metropolis who had certain rights of superintendence over an entire district or area. Such bishops had several titles, such as metropolitan, exarch, and patriarch.

From the later 4<sup>th</sup> century the Bishop of Rome began to claim and exercise primacy over all other churches of the western world. By the later 11<sup>th</sup> century the Bishop of Rome began to claim and exercise a **universal primacy** over the entire Church.

Many who are not Roman Catholics resist the Bishop of Rome's claims of universal primacy. The issue continues to be a stumbling block in ecumenical discussions involving the Roman Catholic Church.

# WHAT IS A PRIMATE?

The **Archbishop of Canterbury** held a regional primacy by the middle ages, and in 1353 it was finally agreed that he would be known as **Primate of All England** and the **Archbishop of York** as **Primate of England**. In the Anglican Communion, the place of honor (but not papal power) is given to Canterbury. The Anglican Communion is divided into about 40 autonomous churches, called provinces, which are each led by a primate.

ANGLICAN  
COMMUNION

IN OVER 165 COUNTRIES



# WHAT IS A PRIMATE?

A **primate** is a bishop with pastoral and administrative responsibility and authority for a group of dioceses that constitute a **province** in the worldwide **Anglican Communion** today. These many regional primates are variously known as primate, metropolitan, archbishop, presiding bishop, or primus.

Primates of all the provinces that make up the Anglican Communion have been meeting regularly since 1979, as requested by the 1978 Lambeth Conference.

The Episcopal Church does not refer to its head bishop as an archbishop. **The Presiding Bishop** is the elected episcopal head of the Episcopal Church, its chief administrator, and spiritual leader. The House of Bishops chooses this leader from one of its members to serve for nine years, or until normal retirement age, if that occurs first. The **Presiding Bishop** of the Episcopal Church has, since the 1982 General Convention, been known as “**Chief Pastor and Primate**.” The Presiding Bishop is sometimes just called “the P.B.”

# HOW DO YOU ADDRESS AN EPISCOPAL PRIMATE?

Envelope:

*The Most Reverend Michael Bruce Curry  
Presiding Bishop and Primate  
Episcopal Church Center  
815 Second Avenue  
New York, NY 1001*

Letter salutation:

*Dear Bishop Curry:  
or Greetings:*

Conversation:

Bishop





## WHAT IS A BISHOP?

A **bishop** is in one of three orders of ordained ministry in the Episcopal (and Roman Catholic and Orthodox) Church whose primary ministry is to provide oversight by being chief pastor of a diocese and guardian of the faith of the Church. As the Latin word for bishop is *episcopus*, the office gives our church its name.

A **diocesan bishop**, the main bishop of a diocese, is sometimes referred to as the “Diocesan,” less often as the “Ordinary.” In the Episcopal Church and some other Anglican Churches the diocesan bishop is elected by the Diocesan Convention. In other Anglican Provinces, bishops are either appointed from outside, or are chosen by existing bishops. This has been known to cause misunderstandings within the Anglican Communion.

A bishop’s ministry is to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as apostle, chief priest, and pastor of a diocese; to guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the whole Church; to proclaim God’s Word; to act in Christ’s name for the world’s reconciliation and the building up of the Church; and to ordain others to continue Christ’s ministry.

# WHAT IS A BISHOP?

Diocesan bishops are often assisted in their duties by **bishops suffragan**, from medieval Latin *suffraganeus*, ‘assistant.’ They are elected in the same way that bishops are, by representatives of the members of the diocese.

**Bishops suffragan** have no jurisdiction, but by the diocesan may assign them responsibility of specific areas with some delegated authority. For example, the Diocese of New York, which comprises 10 counties in the southern part of the state, has three bishops to assist the diocesan, each assigned a specific area of the diocese.

In addition to **bishops suffragan**, other bishops, usually those who have resigned or retired from dioceses in which they were first called to serve, may serve in a capacity similar to suffragans. These are sometimes called “**assistant bishops**,” “**assisting bishops**,” or even “**bishop assisting**.”

Bishops can now be female, and there has been a significant increase in the number of **female bishops** over the past five years.

In the Church of England many bishops are in the House of Lords and so all are addressed as “*Your Lordship*” or even “*Your Grace*.”

# HOW DO YOU ADDRESS AN EPISCOPAL BISHOP?

Envelope:

*The Rt. Rev. Jennifer A. Reddall  
Bishop, The Episcopal Diocese of Arizona  
114 W. Roosevelt Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85003*

Letter salutation:

*Dear Bishop Reddal:  
or Dear Bishop Jennifer:  
or Greetings:*

Conversation:

Bishop



# WHAT IS AN EPISCOPAL PRIEST?

A **priest**, a word comes from the Greek *presbyteros*, meaning elder, is a member of one of the three orders of ordained ministers in the Episcopal Church. He/she has responsibility to represent Christ and His Church, particularly as pastor to the people; to share with the bishop in overseeing the Church; to proclaim the Gospel; to administer the sacraments; and to bless and declare pardon in God's name.

In the Episcopal Church, priests may be male or female and may marry.



# WHAT IS AN EPISCOPAL PRIEST?

There are about 5,000 full-time parochial and non-parochial clergy in the Episcopal Church (more if you count those who are “active,” but not necessarily full-time salaried clergy). Of this number, over 63% are male and almost 37% are female.

Of all full-time Episcopal clergy, over 55% are older than 55, and almost 80 % are older than 45.

Episcopal clergy are gradually becoming more diverse, in particular with respect to sexual orientation.

Clergy of color and LGBTQ+ clergy are more likely to serve outside the parish than white heterosexual clergy.

Compensation, largely determined by each individual parish, is higher for male clergy than female clergy.

# WHAT IS AN EPISCOPAL PRIEST?

“**The Reverend**” is an appropriate title to precede the full name of a priest or deacon. “**The Right Reverend**” is used for a bishop. Reverend is an adjective, not a noun, and is incorrectly used with a last name only, or without the article, the, as in “Reverend Jones.”

Preaching is only one function of the ordained ministry in the Episcopal Church, and so “**Preacher**” is not an appropriate synonym for bishop, priest, or deacon except to describe who is giving the sermon.

In many Episcopal parishes **Father** is a familiar way of referring to a male priest. Formally, he should be referred to as “the Reverend.” A female priest may be referred to as Mother, depending on her preference. This is a relatively recent development. In ancient times, *Father* was a title used only by bishops.

For those speaking English, the custom of using *Father* as a form of address for all clergy seems to have begun first in Ireland.



**I RETAINED THE TITLE OF PRIEST  
FOR ORDAINED ANGLICAN MINISTERS**

**BECAUSE CAT HERDER, THOUGH  
OFTEN MORE DESCRIPTIVE, DID NOT  
SEEM TO HAVE SUFFICIENT DIGNITY**

# WHAT IS A PARISH RECTOR?

A **rector** is the priest in charge of a self-supporting parish, unlike a vicar who is the priest in charge of a supported mission. The rector is a parish's ecclesiastical authority. The term is derived from the Latin for "rule."

A rector is a priest elected by a vestry with the bishop's approval. He/she has tenure and authority and responsibility for worship and the spiritual jurisdiction of a parish, subject to the rubrics of the BCP, the Episcopal Church's constitution and canons, State laws, and the bishop's pastoral direction.

A rector is responsible for selecting all assistant parish clergy, who serve at the rector's discretion.

The church and parish buildings and furnishings are under the rector's control.

The rector, or a vestry member designated by the rector, presides at all vestry meetings.

# HOW DO YOU ADDRESS AN EPISCOPAL PARISH RECTOR?

Envelope:

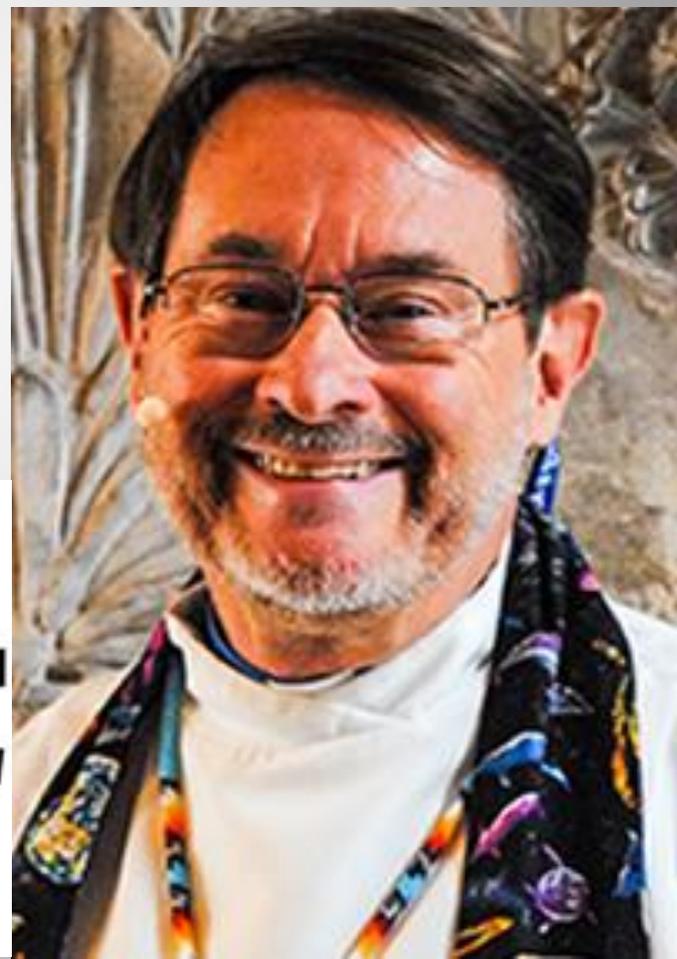
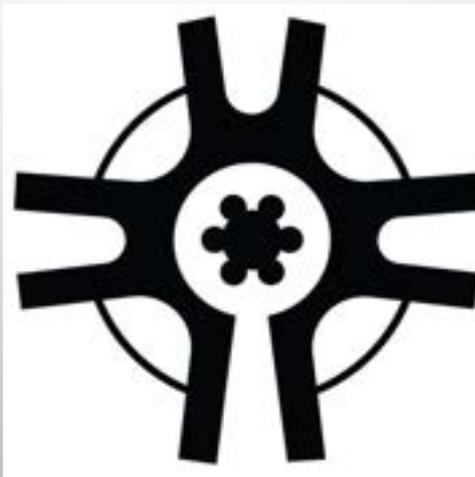
*The Reverend Steve Keplinger  
Rector, Grace St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
2331 E. Adams Street  
Tucson, AZ 85719*

Letter salutation:

*Dear Reverend Father:  
or Dear Father Keplinger:  
or Dear Father Steve:  
or Greetings:*

Conversation:

Reverend Father  
or Father Keplinger  
or Father Steve  
or rarely Mr.Keplinger



# WHAT IS A VICAR?

Episcopal congregations that cannot sustain themselves financially are called **missions**. Because the diocese is supporting them financially, the bishop exercises more control in selecting the clergy person who is similar to a rector. The diocesan bishop is a mission's rector, and the priest representing the bishop is sometimes called the **priest-in-charge** of the congregation and sometimes the **vicar**. The term is derived from the Latin *vicarius*, "substitute."

Unlike in a parish, the group of elected lay leaders in a mission is called a **Bishop's Council** rather than a vestry.

When a mission can financially support itself for a period of time, it can petition the diocese for parish status. It is also possible that a parish can decline in membership, be unable to sustain itself, and may revert back to a mission status.

In the Church of England a vicar is the priest of a parish whose revenues belong to another, while he/she receives a stipend. A vicar's official place of residence is a vicarage rather than a rectory.

# HOW DOES ONE ADDRESS AN EPISCOPAL VICAR?

Envelope:

*The Reverend Canon Debbie Royals,  
Vicar, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church  
545 S.5th Avenue,  
Tucson, AZ 85701*

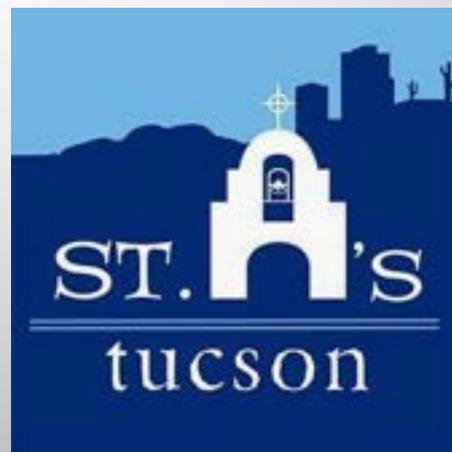
Letter salutation:

*Dear Reverend Mother:  
or Dear Mother Royals:  
or Dear Mother Debbie:  
or in this special case Dear Canon Royals:*

Conversation:

Reverend Mother  
or Mother Royals  
or Mother Debbie  
or rarely Ms Royals  
or in this special case Canon

At St. Andrew's she is often called  
"Vicar Debbie."



# WHAT IS A DEACON?

**Deacons** are at the initial level of three distinct orders of ordained ministry (with bishops and presbyters) in apostolic-succession churches. In the Episcopal Church a deacon exercises “a special ministry of servanthood” directly under the bishop, serving all people and especially those in need.

**Deacons in some other Protestant denominations** are senior members of a congregation (not ordained clergy) and do not have a special form of address. Being a deacon is a role one assumes, not a personal rank one receives.

In the Early Church deacons were ordained “not to the priesthood but to the servanthood [Greek *diakonia*, “ministry”] of the bishop” (Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition*). In the ancient Greek-speaking world the term *diakonos* meant an intermediary who acted or spoke for a superior. Christian deacons were the bishop’s agents, often with oversight of charity.



# WHAT IS AN EPISCOPAL DEACON?

Liturgically, a **deacon** reads the Gospel, sets the Table, leads the Prayers of the People, and dismisses the congregation. Since ancient times the liturgical functions of deacons have suggested the activity of angels, acting as sacred messengers, agents, and attendants.

The revival of the order of deacons in the 20<sup>th</sup> century has emphasized social care and service. Many bishops in the Episcopal Church expect their deacons to promote care of the needy outside the church.

There are about 3,000 permanent deacons in the Episcopal Church. More than 50 deacons are active in diverse ministries across the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona, a number that has grown significantly in the last few years. These deacons bring the world to the Church and bring the Church to the world. They are represented by the Deacons' Council consisting of lay leaders, priests, and deacons who give voice to the deacon community.

# WHAT IS AN EPISCOPAL DEACON?

A **deacon** represents Christ and His Church, particularly as a servant of those in need, and assists bishops and priests in proclaiming the Gospel and administering the sacraments.

A **vocational deacon** is a cleric ordained to the Sacred Order of Deacons (the Diaconate) to fulfill a vocation as well as a ministry in the world under the bishop's direction. While in the world, a deacon interprets the needs of the world, and then communicates such needs to the bishop and the greater church at large. In turn, a deacon ministers to the world as directed by the bishop.

A **transitional deacon** is a postulant to the priesthood who is ordained to the Sacred Order of Deacons as a preliminary step in the process of progressing to ordination as a priest. This practice is required by the Episcopal Church's canons, but those favoring direct ordination to the order for which one is chosen question its theology and usefulness.

# HOW DO YOU ADDRESS AN EPISCOPAL DEACON?

Envelope:

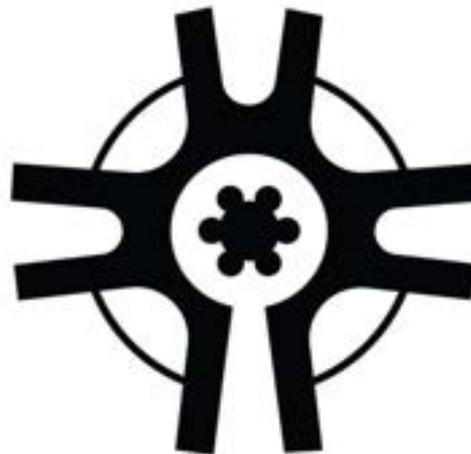
*The Reverend Nancy Meister Book  
Deacon, Grace St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
2331 E. Adams Street  
Tucson, AZ 85719*

Letter salutation:

*Dear Deacon Book:  
or Greetings:*

Conversation:

Deacon Book  
or Deacon Nancy



# WHAT IS A CANON?

The word **canon** is derived from the Greek *kanon*, a “measuring rod or rule.” It is not to be confused with **cannon**, a large-caliber artillery gun. It has several different meanings in the Church.

- 1) The canon of scripture is the list of inspired books recognized by the Church to constitute the Holy Scriptures.
- 2) Canons are the written rules that provide a code of laws for the Church’s governance. The Episcopal Church’s canons are enacted by the General Convention. The canons of a diocese are enacted by its diocesan convention.
- 3) The canon designates the fixed portion of the Great Thanksgiving or the Prayer of Consecration at the Holy Eucharist, including the institution narrative.
- 4) A musical composition with a note-for-note imitation of one melodic line by another that begins one or more notes later than the first. It is also known as a round.

# WHAT IS A CANON?

- 5) A **canon** is an honorific ecclesiastical title given to clergy and lay persons. The cathedral chapter is an official group made up of the dean and chapter of canons, who meet in a chapterhouse. They run the cathedral, especially its business affairs. A canon on a cathedral staff assists the dean, and a canon on a diocesan staff assists the bishop.

Members of the clergy and laity have at times been made honorary canons of a cathedral in recognition of significant service or achievement. The former rector of Grace St. Paul's, the **Reverend Dr. Gordon McBride**, was made a canon just before he retired.

Historically, canons were secular clergy who were connected to cathedrals or special collegiate churches, sharing the revenues and a common rule of life at the church.



# WHAT IS A CANON TO THE ORDINARY?

“**Ordinary**” is another way of referring to a diocesan bishop. In Anglican polity, bishops serve as leaders within a synodical system of governance and, therefore, can be understood as bringing cohesion, direction, and order to the many different moving parts of diocesan discernment and decision-making.

The term ordinary in church usage comes from the Latin *ordinarius*, meaning “the one who brings order.”

The creation of a **canon to the ordinary** role is a relatively recent phenomenon, most common in the Episcopal Church. The ministry of the canon to the ordinary is, in essence, to assist and support diocesan bishops in their episcopal ministry and share with them in the oversight (*episcope*) of the Church within a circle of other diocesan leadership roles.

# HOW DO YOU ADDRESS AN EPISCOPAL CANON?

Envelope:

*The Reverend Canon Anita Braden  
Canon to the Ordinary  
The Episcopal Diocese of Arizona  
114 W. Roosevelt Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85003-1406*

Letter salutation:

*Dear Canon Braden:  
or Greetings:*

Conversation:

Canon



# WHAT IS AN ARCHDEACON?

An **archdeacon** is a clergy person with a defined administrative authority delegated by the diocesan bishop. The office has often been described metaphorically as that of *oculus episcopi*, the "bishop's eye."

Originally the chief of the deacons who assisted the bishop, an **archdeacon** is now typically a priest who serves as the bishop's administrative assistant.

An **archdeacon** was a senior clergy position in certain Eastern Churches, above that of most clergy and below a bishop. In the High Middle Ages it was the most senior diocesan position below a bishop in the Western Church. That is why Anglicans still style them "**venerable**," even though it leads to visualizing a very old man with a straggling beard,

In the Roman Catholic Church, the title "Venerable" is bestowed on a deceased person in the first of three stages leading to beatification (with the title of "Blessed") and canonization (with the title of "Saint").

# HOW DO YOU ADDRESS AN ARCHDEACON?

Envelope:

*The Venerable Amy Bryan  
Archdeacon, The Episcopal Diocese of Arizona  
114 W. Roosevelt Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85003-1406*

Letter salutation:

*Dear Archdeacon Bryan:  
or Greetings:*

Conversation:

Archdeacon  
*or more formally Madam Archdeacon*



# WHAT IS A DEAN?

The word **dean** (Latin *decanus*) originally meant the head of a group of ten soldiers within a *centuria* in the Roman military and, by the 5<sup>th</sup> century, the head of a group of ten monks. Based on the monastic use, it came to mean the head of a chapter of canons of a collegiate church or cathedral.

A dean is the clergy person in charge of a cathedral, although the cathedral is the official headquarters of the bishop.

At a seminary, a dean is the clergy person in charge. The title is sometimes “Dean and President.” The dean is responsible for spiritual, academic, and fiscal aspects of the seminary's mission. A dean is also an academic official who heads a faculty, school, or administrative division in a university or college.

A dean of a deanery (a group of parishes in certain dioceses) is usually a rector of one of the parishes who is elected or appointed to oversee the work of the deanery. The dean is responsible for convening the clergy and at times the lay representatives of the congregations of the deanery.

# HOW DO YOU ADDRESS AN EPISCOPAL DEAN?

Envelope:

*The Very Reverend Troy Mendez  
Dean, Trinity Episcopal Cathedral  
100 W. Roosevelt Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85003*

Letter salutation:

*Dear Dean:  
or Dear Dean Mendez:  
or Dear Dean Troy:  
or Greetings:*

Conversation:

Dean  
*or more formally Mr. Dean*



**TRINITY**  
CATHEDRAL



# ARE THERE EPISCOPAL MONASTICS?

The Episcopal Church canonically recognizes 18 traditional orders and 14 Christian communities for men, women, or both. Many offer retreat houses and individual spiritual direction. Each community has a rule of life and is committed to prayer, life in community, and hospitality.

A **monastic** is a person who devotes his or her life to religious vows and who lives in community (in or associated with a monastery) or as a solitary in a life devoted to God in relative isolation from the world.

Although monastic vows differ from tradition to tradition, they normally include poverty, chastity, and obedience. Most follow the rule of St. Benedict. A monastic's schedule may be divided into prayer, study, and work.

They live in relatively independent abbeys, priories, or convents ruled by an elected leader, with the highest authority residing in a general chapter. The general chapter includes all the professed members of the order.

# ARE THERE EPISCOPAL MONASTICS?

Anglicans have had a rich history monastic orders of both men and women from the earliest days. By the 7<sup>th</sup> century, religious orders were well developed and organized, having performed missionary work for centuries.

Henry VIII discontinued monastic and canonical orders in England, but they were restored in the Anglican Communion during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, encouraged by the Oxford Movement.

Episcopal monasticism began with sisterhoods formed in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The first non-English monastic order for men in the Episcopal Church was the Order of the Holy Cross (OHC), founded in 1884.

Today the Episcopal Church includes a variety of religious orders and other Christian communities who voluntarily commit themselves for life or for a term of years to holding their possessions in common or in trust, to celibate life in community, and to obedience to their rule and constitution.

# HOW DO YOU ADDRESS AN EPISCOPAL MONASTIC?

## Addressing a Nun

Envelope:

*Sister Full Name, initials of order  
if used*

*Address*

Letter salutation:

*Dear Sister Name / Last Name:*

Conversation:

Sister Name / Last Name

Sister

## Addressing a Brother

Envelope:

*Brother Full Name, initials of  
order if used*

*Address*

Letter salutation:

*Dear Brother Given Name:*

Conversation:

Brother Given Name

Brother

Monastics are usually not ordained clergy but, when speaking of the superior of a monastery or convent, use the title “Mother Abbess,” “Mother Prioress” or “Mother Superior,” depending on the preference of the order of nuns.

If unsure which term to use, “Reverend Mother” or “Your Reverence” usually apply.



THE  
END