

THE BEACON

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PERMANENT DIACONATE
OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA

Archdiocese of Atlanta
Permanent Diaconate

Published quarterly
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My Dear Brothers,

Well, if an ordination for 10 new deacons wasn't enough excitement in the past week we just got the announcement about our new Auxiliary Bishop! What an exciting time here in the Archdiocese.

The Ordination for our new deacons was really a special occasion. The joy of these celebrations never dims no matter how many I have participated in. This year was especially significant since it was the first group that experienced formation from beginning to end with Penny Simmons and Deacon Jose Espinosa as Associate Co-Directors for the program. We could not be more blessed with these wonderful leaders.

As these ten men begin their new ministry we should all be reminded of the enthusiasm and zeal that we began our own vocation to the diaconate. The work that these men will be doing in their parishes and the social justice ministry they are assigned to outside of their home parish will bring fresh opportunities for pastoral care and discipleship. We wish them all Godspeed!

The announcement of Bishop-Elect Joel Konzen is also wonderful news. Many of you know him from his many years at Marist. He has been a vital part of the life of the Church here in the Archdiocese for many years. For those of us here in the Chancery we look forward to working with him as he takes on this new role of Shepherd.

We begin the Season of Lent in just a few more days. I pray that it is a good season for each of you. This is always a busy time of year but what a gift to know what comes at the end of this season of reflection.

In this issue you will find information on the upcoming Congress to be held in New Orleans in July celebrating the 50 year anniversary of the Restoration of the Permanent Diaconate in the United States. I hope that many of you will consider attending along with deacons from all over the US. This is a terrific program that has been planned. You will be hearing more about this from our office in the coming weeks.

Know that I am here to serve you and that you are in my prayers. Please keep our entire community in prayer!

Sincerely in Christ,

Deacon Dennis

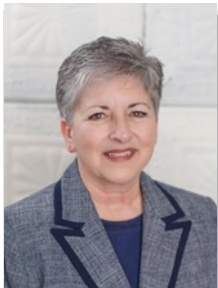


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**Co-Director of
Diaconate For-
mation**

**Office of the
Permanent Di-
aconate**

**Archdiocese of
Atlanta**

Psalm 1.3

A person is as a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither – whatever they do prospers.

Diaconate Formation has been full and rich over the past months.

The retreat for the men who were ordained on February 3, 2018, was held at the St. Bernard Abbey in Cullman, AL, led by Deacon Tom Huff.

The retreat for the wives of the men to be ordained was held at Carmel Retreat Center lead by Fr. Peter Fink, S.J. and Christy Medina and Shawn Gant.

These are the pictures of the men in the Ordination Class of 2018, as they started Diaconate Formation in 2013. Their pictures as deacons will be in the Georgia Bulletin shortly.:



Jamie Agudelo



Bill Boyd



Ed Buckley



Manuel Echevarria



Dave Fragale



Rick Hogan



Pete Ranft



Richard Schmidt



David Schreckenberger



Jim Wolf

Deacon Bill Boyd was ordained in the morning of February 3, 2018, and baptized his grandson that afternoon.



After taking a break to celebrate the Christmas Season, we returned to Diaconate Formation Classes on January 27, 2018.

The Admission to Candidacy and Institution as Lector and Institution as Acolyte were to be celebrated on January 24, 2018. Well, Atlanta had snow that closed the city and so the celebration was rescheduled to February 8, 2018.

Candidates and Aspirants wanted to help those affected by the devastating hurricanes. They put out a plea for water and food and clothing, and donations.

Randy Ortiz (Class of 2020) spearheaded the effort. He took the supplies to Puerto Rico recently and reported on his trip and the need of the people, some of whom do not have electricity yet. Many truckloads of supplies were taken to Puerto Rico. Cash donations from the men in Diaconate Formation and the Deacons, and various parishes totaled near \$42,000.



We have ten new Aspirants, and an additional 34 Candidates in Diaconate Formation.

This year four wives will receive a Master Catechist Certificate.

We are looking for Deacons, ordained at least three years, who would be a Deacon Mentor for a man in Diaconate Formation. We will hold a training session shortly.

If you are interested in this ministry, and would like to know more about your role, the time involved and any other questions, please email Penny Simmons at psimmons@archatl.com or give her a phone call at 404-931-1848 to let her know that you would be interested in serving in his wonderful ministry. The following is a quote from an email received:

"Thanks for the opportunity to serve as a mentor. I think that I have gotten at least as much out of the program as my mentee."

Ed Patterson

We, the men in Diaconate Formation, and their wives, the Faculty, Deacon Mentors, Spiritual Directors, Deacon Jose, and me, and all involved are being nourished by the streams of grace that give us refreshment and the ability to prosper.

Peace,

Penny Simmons

Co-Director of Diaconate Formation

Saturday 3 February, 2018

Ordination to the Permanent Diaconate

Christ the King Cathedral

Atlanta, Georgia

Wilton D. Gregory,

Archbishop of Atlanta

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are awash by the sheer volume of news reports in today's world. The Internet makes it possible for us to read about events that take place from any corner of the globe. We now have instant access to activities that take place almost as soon as they happen. Investigative reporters and hidden security cameras unmask happenings as soon as they take place. Our news frequently can also be twisted so that it is shaped to conform to our own biases and points of view. We can filter out any data that challenges our personal opinions or perspectives. We can watch news that tells us only what we want to hear and continue to believe. There is also a lot of "fake news" that masquerades as the truth. We are perhaps the best-informed people who have ever lived – and at time perhaps the most isolated in what we choose to hear. Nonetheless, we have developed an almost unquenchable passion for the news.

The immediacy and the instantaneous availability of the news distinguishes our generation from among all of the people who have ever lived as people in the know. News is really big business in our world. The electronic and print media corporations are unquestionably major players in our society. The world has grown much smaller indeed because of the development of our ability to communicate. There is no lack of news for most of us.

However, there is a deplorable lack of GOOD NEWS. Except for a relatively few human-interest stories that are scattered about, the media's news coverage is decidedly conflictual, negative and controversial. Famine, scandal, war, violence, protests, natural disasters, civil unrest, revolution, and plague are the common focus of the NEWS. As Dan Rather used to conclude his evening broadcast with his familiar: "and that's the way it is today – Saturday February 3rd 2018," many of us are often left startled and concerned and more than quite eager to know "is that therefore the way it was meant to be and will always be?"

Every heart needs and wants to hear GOOD NEWS – not simply pleasant stories, not just human-interest articles, but GOOD NEWS that gives direction and hope to the human spirit. We want to hear stories about life as it should be and life as it is destined to become. A deacon is a man who must herald GOOD NEWS. A deacon is a man of the GOSPEL. With our hearts filled with hope, we gather at Christ the King Cathedral today to celebrate the Ordination to the Diaconate of these men who stand in our midst prepared for the task and who have been presented to the Church by their pastors, families, and endorsed by our Diaconate Formation community. They represent an increasingly important source of ministry for this local Church. They have become our brothers. The entire Church in North and Central Georgia pledges to them our affection, support, and best wishes. We are happy to know that they will be men who proclaim GOOD NEWS to us and to all those that they will serve as the Church's ministers.

However, because you men are responding to the same Spirit of God that always filled Jesus with power and authority you will now share in His mission. As deacons, you must be men of that same Spirit who proclaim GOOD NEWS. You know that we Americans are caught up in the world of social media information. We are fascinated, and at times, confused and disheartened by the constant barrage of data that comes to us from all sources. In spite of our quest for information, we sometimes fail to hear that news which the heart most desperately needs to hear. We, no less than all other people, need to hear the Gospel proclaimed in all of its power and force. We need to be assured that God's Good News is more enduring than the incessant news stories that capture headlines, but rarely capture hearts.

Saturday 3 February, 2018

Ordination to the Permanent Diaconate
(continued)

The deacons for the Church must proclaim the Gospel, which invites all those who hear it to conversion. Unlike the evening news, the Gospel does not simply reveal the day's events, but the Gospel places those events in their proper perspective. The Gospel offers the whole human family a new way, a hopeful way of seeing our destiny.

You ten men will proclaim the Gospel among people who live in what may often seem like mission lands. These people will often be poor, unsophisticated, and some may even be unaware of the Christ. Nevertheless, they, no less than all your brothers and sisters need GOOD NEWS. Be diligent preachers, men fully aware of the longings of the human heart. While societies and cultures can vary greatly one from another, the human heart is certainly far more similar than unique in its need to find God's rest.

You are men whose service to the Church will be marked with a single-minded dedication to Christ Jesus. You have come to know the Lord most intimately in your lives as husbands and fathers. How fortunate you are to have your wives as your soul mates and friends; they along with your children will ***“help you to keep it real!”*** Listen to them and continue to love them as your first responsibility in faith. Within your own home and at your places of employment, you have discovered the virtues of fidelity, dedication, compassion, and mercy. As deacons, you will build on your life experiences and use that knowledge and those skills to proclaim the Good News of Christ. You will attempt to live in the midst of your sisters and brothers as images of Christ who came to serve rather than to be served.

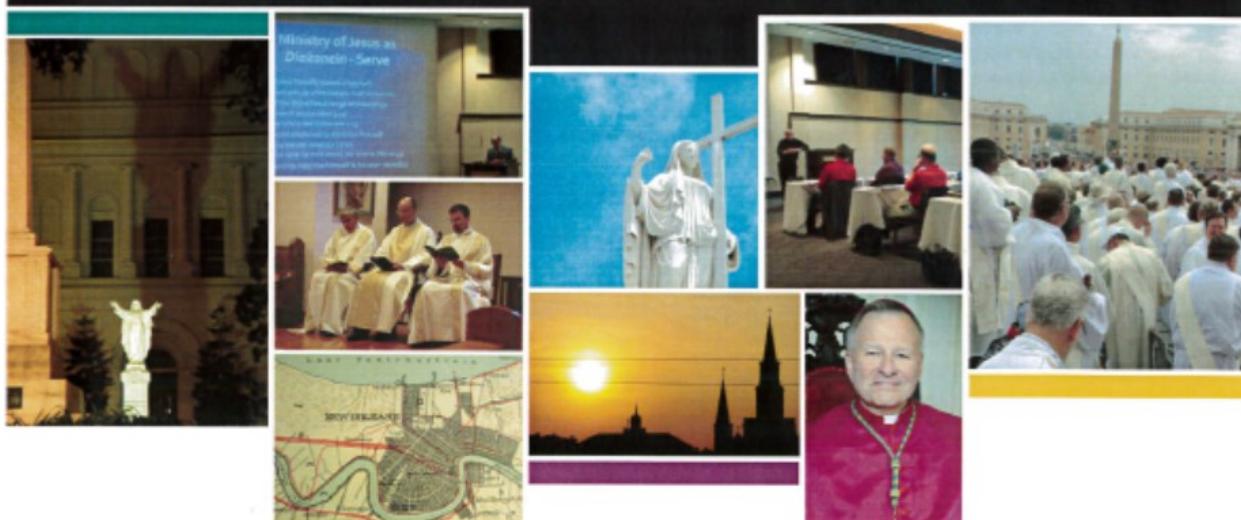
Deacons share in the Sacrament of Holy Orders. You will begin a Sacramental ministry for the Church. Work in a collaborative manner with the priests and the other members of the Church to advance the mission of Christ. Always celebrate the signs of the Church's life with dignity and devotion. Baptize, distribute the Eucharist, and witness the marriage of couples in such a way that Christ is clearly present in the actions that you perform in the name of the Church. Comfort the sorrowing at the funeral liturgy with the compassion of Christ. Preach in such a manner that you reveal Christ and not simply your cleverness. Pray for the Church in a way that leads your hearts to know Christ more perfectly each day.

Be men of GOOD NEWS. Remember that we all need to hear God's own invitation to live under the Reign of God's justice and mercy. Help our hearts to put aside the hardness that so frequently threatens them. Above all, believe the GOOD NEWS that you read in the Gospel and ask the Lord to continue to fashion your hearts so that they may more perfectly be molded according to the Heart of Christ Jesus. You are heralds of the Gospel and the Church must see you live the GOOD NEWS before we can fully believe that your preaching and your teaching and your ministry have the power of God's own Spirit. That Spirit is given to you sacramentally through the Laying on of my Hands and the Church's prayer of Ordination. The Spirit is the very source of GOOD NEWS and today you become instruments of that same Spirit that began and always guided the mission of Jesus. May the Spirit of the Lord who has begun a good work in you, bring it to fulfillment for us all.

The National Association of Diaconate Directors in conjunction with the USCCB Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations invite you to the Archdiocese of New Orleans on July 22 through 28, 2018 to celebrate:

2018 National Congress of Catholic Deacons

Christ the Servant: Yesterday, Today, Forever



SIGN UP TO RECEIVE MORE INFORMATION AT WWW.DEACON2018.ORG

The 2018 National Diaconate Congress will recognize, celebrate and promote awareness of diaconal ministry and the contributions of 20,000 deacons serving the Catholic Church and the people of God following the model of *"Christ the Servant: Yesterday, Today, and Forever."*

The Congress will be celebrated in the Archdiocese of New Orleans at the invitation of Most Reverend Gregory M. Aymond, Archbishop of New Orleans. Festivities begin on Sunday afternoon, July 22, 2018 with the Opening Ceremony and Opening Mass. The week includes daily Mass and Morning Prayer, presentations, workshops, ministry immersions, tours, exhibits, and numerous celebrations! The Congress concludes on Thursday, July 26, 2018 with Mass and Closing Ceremony.

Early registration opens in January 2017 on www.Deacon2018.org. Deacons can register at that time for \$250; and wives are just \$99! Hotel room, meals and optional activities are extra. See website for details!

July 2018 – Diaconal Congress Preliminary Schedule of Events

DAY 1 • SUNDAY

22

Congress Opening

- Welcome and Opening Mass with Archbishop Aymond
- Keynote Address
- Greeting from Rome
- Participant Registration
- Celebrations!

DAY 2 • MONDAY

23

"Christ the Servant: Yesterday"

- Mass and Morning Prayer
- Spiritual and cultural roots of the renewal of diaconal ministry in the model of Jesus who came to serve
- AM: Major Presentations
- PM: Workshops, Ministry Immersion, Roundtable Conversations, Tours, Exhibits

DAY 3 • TUESDAY

24

"Christ the Servant: Today"

- Mass and Morning Prayer
- In-depth examination of the state of the diaconate in today's Church
- AM: Major Presentations
- PM: Workshops, Ministry Immersion, Roundtable Conversations, Tours, Exhibits

DAY 4 • WEDNESDAY

25

"Christ the Servant: Forever"

- Mass and Morning Prayer
- Future of the diaconate in service and leadership for the people of God
- AM: Major Presentations
- PM: Workshops, Ministry Immersion, Roundtable Conversations, Tours, Exhibits

DAY 5 • THURSDAY

26

Congress Closing

- Congress Review and Awards
- Closing Address and Closing Mass with Daniel Cardinal DiNardo
- Blessing and Dismissal

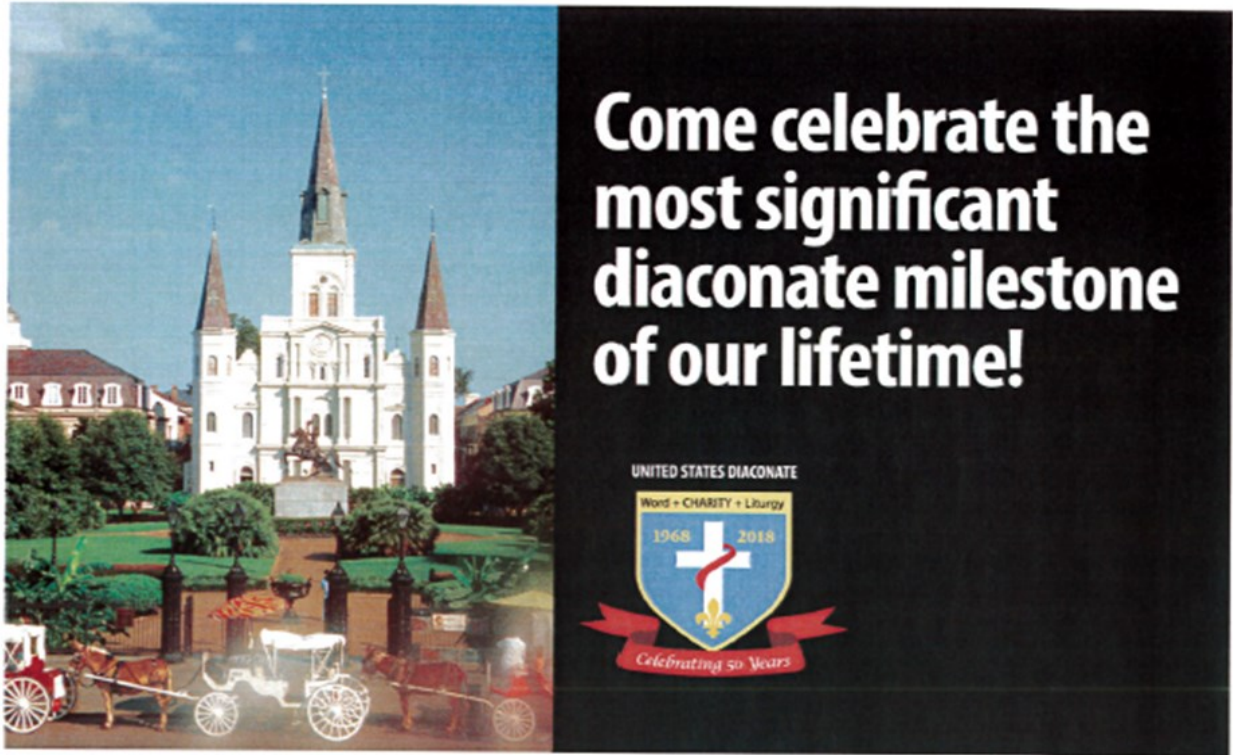
Come be inspired about your diaconal ministry by these great presenters at the 2018 Congress:

- **Most Reverend Gregory M. Aymond**, Archbishop of New Orleans, Convention Host and Keynote Presenter
- **His Eminence Daniel Cardinal DiNardo**, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston, Vice President of the USCCB
- **Most Reverend Frederick F. Campbell**, Bishop of Columbus, Former Chair, Bishops Committee on the Diaconate
- **Rev. W. Shawn McKnight**, Former Executive Director of CCLV
- **Deacon William Ditewig**, Former Executive Director of the Bishops Committee on the Diaconate; noted author
- **Most Reverend Gerald F. Kicanas**, Diocese of Tucson, Former Chair of the Bishops Committee on the Diaconate
- **Deacon James Keating**, Institute for Priestly Formation, Creighton University; noted author
- And More! Check the Deacon2018.org website for updates!



And have fun too while visiting the Crescent City during its 300th birthday!

- Fabulous New Orleans faith, food, culture, architecture and live jazz!
- 2018 is also New Orleans' 300th birthday for added excitement!
- Historic Jackson Square and the Cathedral-Basilica of St. Louis King of France built in 1720
- 29 museums including The National WWII Museum
- Tour all of New Orleans on the newly restored trolley lines
- Historic French Quarter and French Market
- Audubon Aquarium of the Americas
- Galleries for Arts and Antiques
- Shopping, Restaurants and Nightlife
- Nightly celebrations for the whole family!



Retreat for Deacons in the Archdiocese of Atlanta

The Council of Deacons has made special arrangements with Ignatius House to provide a retreat especially for Permanent Deacons in the Archdiocese of Atlanta. The Retreat will be held on May 18-20, 2018 and will be led by Fr. Peter Fink, SJ of Ignatius House. As suggested by the survey results found elsewhere in this issue of the *Beacon*, this retreat will be very spiritual in nature and include time for private meditation as well as presentation. More details about this retreat will be available soon. This is an exciting partnership and it is hoped that there will be a good response from the Deacons in the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

The dates for the upcoming ABG Conference with Deacons are:

May 2 11:00-12:00

Aug 8 11:00 – 12:00

Nov 15 11:00 – 12:00

Council of Deacons

The Council of Deacons met via telephone conference call at 7:00 p.m., on Wednesday, January 24, 2018. New Officers were elected: Deacon Tom G. Walter, Chair and Deacon Leonard Chambliss, Vice-Chair. There was considerable discussion about future direction of the Council. It was determined that the Council needed to maintain its current committee structure, but establish 4 or 5 programs where the Council will focus attention for 2018. The Council will move from meeting quarterly to meeting monthly in the short term to focus on identifying those 4-5 programs and begin planning.

The Council also briefly discussed the Deacons' Professional Development Survey that was recently administered in the Archdiocese. Further discussion of these results will be a major focus on the February meeting. A few of the results follow. After a slow start, there was a 48% response rate, which is quite respectable. Of the respondents, 46% said they had not attended a Deacon and Wives Retreat in the last 5 years. Of those, 52% said it was too expensive and 48% said it was too social. If the Deacons' Council were to also hold a retreat for deacons without wives, twice as many said that they would attend that retreat rather than the Deacons and Wives Retreat. Asked to respond to the best months to hold a retreat, 44% preferred the September/October timeframe, though 22% indicated that January/February would be fine. Approximately 42% indicated that they would travel more than 75 miles to attend a retreat. Approximately 80% indicated that a religious site would be good for a retreat, while 58% indicated that a remote location such as the Lodge at Amicalola Falls would be good. In terms of other professional development workshops, 60 % preferred a Saturday half-day workshop with a variety of topics suggested.

Anyone who would like to receive all of the results should send an email note to Deacon Tom Walter at: tgwalter5817@gmail.com.

Wives Day of Reflection

The Second Annual Wives Day of Reflection will be held at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, March 3, 2018 at St. Thomas More Catholic Church in Mulhern Hall. The program will again be led by Sister Susan Arcaro and Sister Barbara Young, the Cenacle Sisters of North Georgia. All wives of deacons, widows of deacons and wives of men in formation for the diaconate are welcome. **Please share this information with them.** Invitations are in the mail or will be soon. The cost is only **\$20.00** which will cover the cost of morning refreshments and lunch. The program will end after lunch, at approximately 2:00 p.m. Checks made out the **Archdiocese of Atlanta**, name of attendee, and email address should be sent to:

Deacon Tom G. Walter
5817 North Circle
Flowery Branch, GA 30542
tgwalter5817@gmail.com



Pray For Us

Deacon Paul Franklin

Marianne Takizala, niece of Deacon Kapya Ngoy

Deacon David Briselden

Deacon Hilliard Lee

Deacon Scott Medine

Deacon Joseph H. Nguyen

Deacon Augustin Pierre-Louis

Deacon Scott Sparks



For Those Who Have Died

**Richard Harris, brother of
Deacon Peter Harris, 2-7-2018**

**Maria de los Angeles Merlo, sister of
Deacon José "Trini" Merlo-Quintero, 1-29-2018**

Deacon Mike Landaiche 1-26-2018

**Delia Gonzalez, Mother-in-law of
Deacon John Martin 1-22-2018**

**Joe Thomasberger, father of
Deacon David J. Thomasberger, 12-21-2017**

Deacon Fernando Barrueta 11-21-2017

Deacon Will MacDonald 11-11-2017