

Archdiocese of Atlanta

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Deacon
Dennis Dorner
Chancellor and
Director of
Permanent
Diaconate

THE BEACON

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PERMANENT DIACONATE
OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA

January may have been the longest month I can remember. Perhaps it was the very busy schedule with two weeks of travel. Perhaps it was coming off the Christmas holidays and having been away from the office. Or it may have been the last week of the month getting slammed by the flu (in spite of getting the vaccine)! At any rate it was a long five weeks and here we are.

February started out very special with the ordination of our eight new deacons. Bishop Konzen gave a beautiful homily which is included later in this issue. Having now participated in these ordinations over the past 14 years, not to mention my own in 2004 I am ever awed by the beauty of the liturgy, the music, the profound prayer of Ordination and the absolute joy of the events. Please keep these newly ordained and their families in your prayers as they begin their diaconate. If it is anything like the rest of ours it will be quite a ride!

This week I leave for Rome. Our bishops will be making their Ad Limina visit with the Holy Father and the Curial offices at the Vatican. We have 25 pilgrims traveling to Italy to coincide with the bishops' visit. This is my fourth trip to the Vatican and I am as excited as the first time. With all of the challenges we face in our Church today there is something solid and reassuring about the Eternal City. Perhaps that is why it has that name. As it says in Romans chapter 8, who will ever prevail against that which Christ created? Pray for our bishops during this visit and that our Holy Father wisely and quickly appoints a new shepherd for this local Church!

In just a few weeks we will be entering the season of Lent. My prayer is that all of us are able, during this time of introspection and reflection, to immerse ourselves in the real reason for this penitential season in the Church calendar. It's an opportunity to look over our actions in the last year and see where we may have missed the mark. It's also a time to listen ever more intently for the quiet voice of our Lord, leading us to where He wants us to be going as we move ahead in our lives. Discernment of God's Will for our lives is an ongoing everyday challenge. And when we do hear His plan we then must pray and work even harder to stay on that track. In these times of uncertainty and ongoing attacks by the Evil One, our call, as deacons, to be a model and example for others in following the Lord is even more important. In that prayer of Ordination we heard on Saturday these words:

Send forth upon them Lord, we pray, the Holy spirit, that they may be strengthened by the gift of your sevenfold grace for the faithful carrying out of the work of the ministry.

May there abound in them every Gospel virtue: unfeigned love, concern for the sick and poor, unassuming authority, the purity of innocence, and the observance of spiritual discipline.

May your commandments shine forth in their conduct, so that by the example of their way of life they may inspire the imitation of your holy people. In offering the witness of a clear conscience, may they remain strong and steadfast in Christ, so that by imitating on earth your Son, who came not to be served but to serve, they may be found worthy to reign in heaven with him, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen!

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

The Richness of Formation



Penny Simmons

Co-Director of Diaconate
Formation

Proverbs 1:5

“let the wise listen and add to their learning and let the discerning get guidance . . .”

Diaconate Formation has had a wonderful flurry of activity since the beginning of this year.

In preparation for Ordination, the Class of 2020 was on their Pre-Ordination Retreat, the first week in January. Their wives were on Retreat the following weekend.



On January 15, 2020, at St. Jude the Apostle, Bishop Ned Shlesinger admitted nine men to Candidacy; nine men were Instituted as Lector



and eight men were instituted as Acolytes.



Bishop Joel Konzen ordained eight men to the Permanent Diaconate on February 1, 2020.



And wives on retreat

We are grateful to the many who helped organize and host the celebrations. We are also grateful to the men and wives in Diaconate Formation who served as acolytes, lectors, and ushers. Many people in parishes gave time to offer beautiful music at our celebrations; and many others provided for receptions.

We are back in Diaconate Formation Classes as of January 26, 2020.

The beginning of the Book of Proverbs introduces us to the need for ongoing learning, or formation.

There is a richness in formation, not only Diaconate Formation, but also formation that continues for all of our lives. When we stop learning, or cease being formed in our faith, we stand still. The danger of 'standing still' in our faith is that we can easily be swept backward, or worse, become stagnant.

So how do we continue our formation as Christians? Formation, or study, happens through reading, listening, music, seminars, and sharing with other people on our journey.

The Office of Diaconate Formation will host a **continuing education session in the Spring 2020 at the St. Stephen Center for Diaconal Studies, from 9:00 am to about 2:30 pm on Pastoral Care and the Deacon.** Sandra H. McKay, BSN, M.Ed., LMFT, is the facilitator. We have space for about 20 to attend the session. If you are interested in attending, please email psimmons@archatl.com We begin our Diaconate Formation Day with Morning Prayer at 7:40 am, followed by Mass at 8:00 am and would welcome you to join us for both.

Plans are also in process regarding a continuing education session on *Bio-Ethics and the Ministry of the Deacon* for the Fall of 2020.

Formation also takes place when we share our journey with others. I have heard an educator say, "At all times in our lives we are both teacher and student." It is true.

The Ministry of Deacon Mentor fills this role perfectly. The Candidate will learn from a Deacon Mentor; and the Deacon Mentor renews his knowledge in the Ministry of the Deacon by sharing and mentoring a man and his wife in Diaconate Formation.

From the Deacon Mentor handbook:

"A mentor is a guide who can help a candidate find the right direction and who can help him develop solutions to issues, problems and human interactions. Mentors rely upon having had similar experiences to gain an empathy with the candidate and an understanding of their issues."

I have spoken to many Deacon Mentors over the years and they all express the joy of having journeyed with a Candidate. They say that they too have learned along the way and have renewed their joy in Diaconate Ministry.

Does the ministry of Deacon Mentor take time? Yes. You will be surprised how it fits perfectly into your Ministry as a Deacon. Come to the training session for Deacon Mentors on August 29, 2020, at the St. Stephen Center for Diaconal Studies. Ask your wife to come with you. Learn what it takes to be a Deacon Mentor.

We have ten Aspirants beginning formation this year. Each will need a Deacon Mentor as they move into Candidacy next year. More information will be available as we draw nearer to August 29, 2020.

On September 26, 2020 and October 10, 2020, we will offer two all day sessions for Information and Inquiry on the Permanent Diaconate. We ask your continued prayers for the men and wives who are in Diaconate Formation. We have wonderful Instructors who give generously of their time to instruct the men and wives. Please also hold them in prayer.

Many others serve Diaconate Formation in various areas on the Diaconate Formation Advisory Board: Information and Inquiry Sessions, Selection, Scrutiny and Evaluation, Faculty and Curriculum, Wives and Families, as Spiritual Advisors, and the area of Social Justice.

Reading back over this, I see that we have a flurry of wonderful activity in the future for Diaconate Formation also.

Yours in Christ,

Penny Simmons

Co-Director of Diaconate Formation

PLEASE PRAY FOR US

FOR THOSE THAT HAVE DIED

Sandra Machan, sister-in-law of Deacon Bill Hampton, February 19, 2020
Eileen Fagan, wife of Deacon Pat Fagan, February 1, 2020
Paul Swope, father of Deacon Steve Swope, January 13, 2020
Mary Jane Gagnon, Great Aunt of Deacon Erik Wilkinson, December 28, 2019
Betty-Lee Egan, Wife of Deacon Ray Egan, December 16, 2019
Doris Rodriguez, Mother of Deacon Joe Pupo, November 25, 2019
Deacon Tom Metzger, November 21, 2019
Robert Walker, Jr. Stepfather of Deacon Scott Parker, November 7, 2019
Christopher Byrne, Brother of Mike Byrne, October 2019
Tom Ziska, Brother-in-law of Deacon Dick Tolcher, October 14, 2019
Alice Wolf, Mother of Deacon Jim Wolf, October 5, 2019
Sharon Schroeder, Sister-in-law of Deacon Chris Andranaco, October 2, 2019

FOR THE SICK AND SUFFERING

Deacon Stephen Ponichtera, surgery
Deacon Scott Parker, surgery
Deacon Randy Ory, surgery
Deacon Dick Downey, Surgery
Deacon Joe Eustace, Hospital
Deacon Jerry Connell, rehab
Deacon Bill Jindrich, Surgery
Deacon Jim Stone, Healing and comfort
Barbara Metzger, Wife of Deacon Tom Metzger, Healing and comfort
William Devereux, brother of Deacon Frank Devereux, Healing and comfort

Ordination to the Permanent Diaconate

Cathedral of Christ the King

February 1, 2020

Good morning once again, and greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

This morning, the Church greatly rejoices over the gift God is making possible today, the ordination of these eight men to the Diaconate and to the service of Catholic life in North Georgia.

We first offer thanks to God the Father. Any blessing we receive, we receive by His grace, because He has planted in us the ability and desire to receive His gifts—and to bring them to life among us. This is the meaning of all vocation, whether it happens in the context of family life, single life, or life consecrated by religious vows or by the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Vocation is a gift for us all, born and given life by Baptism and Confirmation, but however it appears, however it plays out, vocation is what the word says, a calling from God. May God be ever glorified, that He thinks so lovingly of His Church, of those who are His own on earth, to send us His Holy Spirit and to make of us all servants in the love of Jesus Christ, servants bound to one another through the commitment to humble ourselves in witness to Christ's own generous *mandatum*, His selfless ministry.

After thanking God for the vocation given to these men, we next owe gratitude to their families, their wives especially, but also, their children, their parents, and by extension, their friends – those who, without fail, have stood by these men while they undertook the rigorous formation necessary for every deacon. No one, in pursuit of a hard-sought goal, can know greater comfort and encouragement than from those we cherish most and on whose hopeful accompaniment we depend. To all here who have given support and encouragement to these men, the Church offers her gratitude for a work well done for the sake of these men you love and for the sake of those whom they will serve.

And last in this litany of thanksgiving, we're grateful for the gift these men give of themselves. They have received the call and have not turned aside. As we have heard in the first reading about the call of Jeremiah, they have placed their trust in the Lord, and gained assurance and peace from the words He spoke then to His prophet, and that today he speaks to these men: “...*to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak...*”

My sisters and brothers, as I speak now directly to the men I have the honor to ordain today, I remind them and all here present about the seriousness of their commitment and their new responsibilities. I hope that each one of you will pray for them from this day on, that their vocations will endure, and that God's help will bear them up daily, for the rest of their lives, because their work as deacons of the Church will be a ministry like that of God's own Son, that will last until the moment God calls them to His side.

And so, to you who are about to be ordained Deacons of our Holy Church,

The work you begin today, a work born in the womb of Holy Orders, a work brought to life by the special grace of God given in this Holy Sacrament, for you this work will be a journey, in fact, a missionary journey, not unlike the work of the first deacons, elected to assist the Apostles as they took the Word of God and the celebration of the Eucharist out to the whole world. On this holy journey you will travel into a variety of parishes, into many labors, and into many hearts ready to receive the truth that you bring. But though *your* hearts will reach outwards, you will still need, at the center of your life, a source, a bulwark, a rock and a foundation, a place where there is no change of meaning, and where you may always renew the call you answer today, re-establishing the seal you place on your heart in this Sacrament.

From the Gospel of John we heard the words of our Lord telling us where that unchanging center of your life will always be found. He said then, and He says to you today:

...where I am, there also shall my servant be.

Where is the Lord to be found? Where can the deacons of His Church always find Him? Where indeed but at the sacred convergence of the deacons' duties – the Word, the Altar, and the Divine Work of Charity.

Christ is always present in His word. But you must *be sure* that your understanding of the Word is the Church's understanding of the Word – perfected by the wisdom that is our treasure to share – the wisdom of the Fathers, the Saints, the wealth of learning offered by the Church's Doctors, scholars, and commentators. And I must remind you that how you speak the Word must be free of ego, of self aggrandizement, and of show. Christ did not say that WE would be the fulfillment of His word – Christ said that HE was the fulfillment of all God's prophecies, the Word made flesh to dwell among us – that HE was the Way the Truth and the Life. WE are simply messengers of the King, and the KING'S glory must shine if His Light is to move those we serve and love in His Name. Our own light is dim by comparison, and it will die when we die. But the Word of God, when spoken by us with truth and humility, will live forever. The record of *how* we speak the Word of God will be significant when, at the end, we come before our Judge.

Christ is always present, too, we know, at the altar – in the Sacraments that lead us TO the altar, and in the Sacrament that courses FROM the altar itself. The deacon's place at the altar is truly a place next to the Person of Christ Himself. It is the deacon's special privilege, in so many ways, to turn to the People of God and say, "See what I see, hear what I hear: the Lord is among us, and He brings us life."

It now becomes your duty not to fashion your service at the altar according to your own designs but in accord with all that the Church has preserved and keeps alive in her tradition of sacred worship. Respect for the rite and its rubrics, respect for the solemnity of the action of the Eucharist -- these are to be the hallmarks of your liturgical offering. All that you learn at the altar will enfold you and clothe you as you come before God to give an account of your life of love and service.

And last, my dear brothers, Christ is to be found with those you serve. This is why the Church expects you to serve them with love and respect, with unending patience, and with the perseverance necessary to bring about healing, to see that conflicts among the People of God are resolved, to see pain and suffering reduced and—where possible—eliminated. As Christ's ordained ministers, you will share to some degree in their suffering. Our Lord, in revealing His life and His truth, told us where He would be found when He said:

As you have done for the least of these, my brothers and sisters, you have done for me.

He will be found in those He has given us to raise up through the mercy He promised and demonstrated in abundance. We offer this gift of mercy, assured in our own admission that we cannot be saved except for the greatness of HIS mercy. Let the Church lead you, then, as in your preaching and your conduct at the altar, in the exercise of mercy and love, for the example as well as the prayers of the Apostles and the saints who followed them is the storehouse that acts as a dispensary of mercy and love, a fount of charity and spiritual wellness that you may and should tap each day.

Finally, to all gathered here for this joyous occasion:

What has been said of the Diaconate, of this unique service to the Church, and of its duties with the Word of God, with worship at the altar, and with the works of apostolic charity, is of concern to us all. We may differ in the way we have been called to labor for the Church. Our hands may perform different tasks, our feet walk upon different paths, our eyes look from different vantage points, but there is only one call and one focus for us all, the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ, our only Lord. Where He is, there will His servants be found. And where they gather in His Name, He is in their midst.

As we move now into the sacred rites of Ordination, we look to the Holy Eucharist for the resolve, the strength we will need to live in the way of goodness that we recall and celebrate today. On this special day, we pray for our deacons and for all those who give their lives in service to the Church of Jesus Christ. For when, into the earth of this Church a life is poured, and a seed planted, then the harvest will surely follow. "Truly God has blessed us this day – to Him be the power and the glory, forever. Amen"

Deacon Dorner's Visit to the Vatican



Deacon Alfred Mitchel's Retirement Mass



Deacon Alfred Mitchell was ordained 1987. In 1990, he was asked to lead the diaconate program in the Archdiocese. He served for 15 years in as the director.

He has been married since October 16, 1959.

Deacon Alfred retired on January 1, 2020.

Trip to Israel



Brother Deacons,

Have you ever wondered how rich your preaching would be if you actually walked in the footsteps of Jesus? Have you always wanted to go to the Holy Land but the cost was prohibitive? Have people been talking about organizing a parish pilgrimage to the Holy Land? I have been working for the past couple years as a tour coordinator with Good Shepherd Travel, a full-service travel agency that specializes in trips to the Holy Land and is based in Ft. Worth Texas.

Good Shepherd is owned and operated by Tony Abuaita, a Christian Palestinian who is an American citizen and has residences in Ft. Worth and Bethlehem and has partnered with hundreds of Catholic Priests and deacons, and Protestant ministers, leading pilgrimages to Israel. Good Shepherd Travel is not just a business, but a vocational ministry for Tony.

Good Shepherd Travel is offering an eight day familiarization trip to the Holy Land January 11-19 of 2021, for a select group of deacons and their wives from the Archdiocese of Atlanta **at an unbelievable cost: \$1,190 for the deacon and \$1,690 for your wife.**

Should you decide to organize a parish pilgrimage in the future, the \$1,190 deacon cost is fully refundable! Also, for an additional \$590 per person, Good Shepherd is offering a five day extension to **Greece from January 19-24**. That's a total of only \$4,060 for both you and your wife for the entire 13 days!

This price includes air fare, hotels, breakfast and dinners - all the costs except lunches and tips. The reason Good Shepherd is offering such a low cost is to allow you to experience the Holy Land in hopes of leading future pilgrimages from your parish.

If you are interested in taking advantage of this opportunity, contact me as soon as possible. This trip will be limited to fifty people maximum.

Deacon Keith Kolodziej

330 Wexford Glen

Roswell, Ga. 30075

Cell- 770-634-3642

email: deaconkk@bellsouth.net

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"In His Footsteps" Pilgrimage Itinerary Highlights

January 11 – 19, 2021

Day 1: Departure from USA

- Depart for your overnight flights to the Holy Land.

Day 2: Arrive Tel Aviv, Transfer to Tiberius, Nazareth

- Arrive in Tel Aviv in the AM, meet your guide and transfer to Tiberius via coastal plains

Day 3: Caesarea Philippi, Sea of Galilee

- Caesarea Philippi.
- Tabgha, site of the multiplication of the fishes and the loaves
- The Mount of Beatitudes for a time of prayer and reflection.
- St. Peter's Primacy. Capernaum. Enjoy a meal of "St. Peter's fish" and boat ride on the Sea of Galilee.
- Dinner and overnight at hotel in Tiberius.

Day 4: Nazareth, Mount Carmel.

- Cana of Galilee. Nazareth, visiting the Basilica of the Annunciation, St. Joseph's Church, and Mary's well.
- Drive to city of Haifa, Mount Carmel, visit church of Prophet Elijah.
- Visit Caesarea Maritima.
- Dinner and overnight at hotel in Bethlehem.

Day 5: Bethlehem, Dead Sea.

- Old city of Bethlehem. The Church of the Nativity. Shepherd's Field in Beit Sahour.
- Visit the ELCJHL Lutheran School in Beit Sahour.
- Qumran, site of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls
- Visit Jericho, Zacchaeus tree old city and view mount of Temptation.
- If time permits, we will enjoy a float in the Dead Sea
- Dinner and overnight at hotel in Bethlehem.

Day 6: Mt of Olives, Gethsemane Mt. Zion

- Depart Bethlehem to Jerusalem
- Panoramic view from the top of Mount of Olives.
- Ascension Hill on the Mount of Olives. The Church of Pater Noster. The Church of Dominus Flevit.
- The Garden of Gethsemane and the Church of All Nations.
- Mt. Zion and the Cenacle (Upper Room).
- Dinner and overnight in Bethlehem.

Day 7: Old City Jerusalem

- The Western Wall and the Temple Mount, view of the Dome of the Rock and El-Aqsa Mosque.
- St. Anne's Church, the Pools of Bethesda.
- Walk the Via Dolorosa ending at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Ein Karem.
- Dinner and overnight in Bethlehem.

Day 8: Bethlehem

- Meet with the local Christian leaders
- We will enjoy a free day for reflection and celebration.
- Dinner and overnight in Bethlehem.

Day 9: Departure

- We will arrive back in the USA the same day