

Archdiocese of Atlanta

Published quarterly
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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



My Dear Brothers,

This craziest ever year of 2020 has drawn to a close and, at least for me, it couldn't have come soon enough. What a year it was. I realized when I began to write that the last time the newsletter came out I was just leaving for Rome and a chance to meet the Holy Father. I got home one week before the Italy shut down. It wasn't long before all of us were in a new way of operating.

In spite of the many challenges we have had some highlights, not the least of which was celebrating Archbishop Hartmayer's Installation in early May. It's been an interesting transition for all since we haven't really been "in person" very much. In October we were able to celebrate the Archbishop's Imposition of the Pallium while still maintaining all of the COVID restrictions.

I am happy to report that most of our deacon community has remained safe and healthy during these months. We have, however, lost both deacons and some family members and we must continue to be vigilant and also to pray for an end to this horror.

I am finding it hard to believe that on Jan 2 I had been in this position for fifteen years. It has been my great honor to represent and serve the deacons of this Archdiocese. Now Cardinal Wilton Gregory asked me, when I began this journey as Director, how long I was willing to commit to the position. I recall saying that as long as I was having fun and stayed healthy I would be here. While he has moved on to a much bigger role in the Church, I am so pleased to say that I am still having fun and am pleased and humbled to be here, to serve each of you and your families by serving the Archbishop.

This was a very different Christmas as we continued to traverse the challenges of COVID. I am sure you all are joining me in prayers that we will see an end to this most difficult year and a brighter New Year in 2021.

May all of the blessings of this Sacred and Joyful Season of Christmas continue to be upon you and your loved ones, upon those who you serve in our many communities and throughout the Archdiocese.

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](#)

Keep our entire community in prayer!

The Richness of Formation



Penny Simmons
Co-Director of
Diaconate
Formation

“Bless us, O Lord, and these Thy gifts which we are about to receive, from Thy bounty, through Christ, Our Lord. Amen”

Sound familiar? Yes, we say that short simple prayer before every meal and I bet you do too.

It has become my prayer in this year – for everything.

2020 has been a very tough, sorrowful, interesting year and yet we have received many gifts from our loving God.

Those of us in Diaconate Formation have been the beneficiaries and now I am wondering what additional gifts we are still about to receive.

In February, eight wonderful men were ordained to the Permanent Diaconate. A gift to the Archdiocese of Atlanta and to be sure a gift to their wives and families and those they will minister to. We had an opportunity to meet with the new deacons and their wives virtually in the Fall and even with all of the restrictions, they are finding ways to minister and stay safe.

Four wives in the Class of 2021 who attended more than 80% of the Diaconate Formation Classes and met other requirements, received a Master Catechist Certificate. These wonderful women are also a gift.

Sometimes a challenge becomes a gift. You all know the challenges that everyone faced in late February and early March, and through the rest of 2020. We were able to continue Diaconate Formation through a virtual platform that Deacon Jose Espinosa researched and put into place in late March.

Diaconate Formation Aspirants, Candidates and Instructors carried on and we did not need to cancel formation or possibly delay the Ordination scheduled for February 2021.

Our gifts didn't end there. Deacon Jose researched and found an even better virtual platform for us to use as we started Diaconate Formation Classes once again in August.

The Richness of Formation

Another gift: We were able to hold our Annual Diaconate Formation Retreat virtually, with Bishop Ned Shlesinger as our retreat master in September.

And still another gift: We held the Wives of the Men in Formation retreat virtually, led by Christy Medina and Kathy Wolf in November.

We learned many, many things that we would not have learned if formation had continued as it always does.

We learned the value of and need for Community. Yes, we missed celebrating Mass on Formation Saturday Mornings; and we missed 'coffee break' discussions between classes; we missed the Eucharistic Congress, the Summer Cook Out for the Seminarians that we do each summer, and so much more that we were able to do when we meet in person.

The Aspirants and Candidates found ways to form community. Classes met early on formation days to pray Morning Prayer together virtually; some met virtually to say the Rosary together each Monday evening; one group, Aspirants, climbed Stone Mountain, with masks, to pray Morning Prayer together. They took the masks off for a second to get this picture.



The Richness of Formation

The men continue meeting with Spiritual Directors, Deacon Mentors, and stayed in touch with their Social Justice ministries through virtual meetings, phone, email and text.

Six men in the Class of 2021 will be Ordained to the Permanent Diaconate on February 6, 2021, and one Seminarian will also be ordained a Deacon. A true gift.

We do face restrictions for this Ordination in the number that may attend. Each man is limited on the number of family and friends that may be invited. We cannot send a general invitation to all Priests and Deacons, Diaconate Formation Faculty, Deacon Mentors, Spiritual Directors or even the Wives of Deacons, Kenney Hall will not be available, and we will not be able to hold a reception afterward.

While this saddens us, the blessing is that the celebration will be live-streamed and that's a real gift. The gift that you may give to the men looking for Ordination will be your prayers. Meet them in the Georgia Bulletin after the Ordination.

We look to welcome eight new Aspirants and their wives in January to Diaconate Formation.

Deacon Jose Espinosa and I are so grateful that this year in Diaconate Formation has been wonderfully rich, filled with many blessings and gifts. We are even grateful for the challenges that helped us grow and find other resources to continue Formation that probably wouldn't have been available to us five years ago.

So we pray, "Bless us, O Lord, and these Thy gifts which we are about to receive from Thy bounty, through Christ Our Lord. Amen."

Penny Simmons

Co-Director of Diaconate Formation

THE MONASTERY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Zoom Retreat Schedule – 2021

In response to the present pandemic (Covid-19) the retreat house is closed for an indefinite period of time. We are however, presenting Zoom retreats. We will have members of the community give these conferences, as well as a few of our regular Retreat Presenters. Please call the retreat house if you are interested in joining one of our Zoom Conferences.

**Our Office is open Monday-Friday 8:00-1:00 and the number is 770-760-0959.
Suggested donation for Retreats: \$45.00**

Please visit their web site: [Monastery of the Holy Spirit | \(trappist.net\)](http://MonasteryoftheHolySpirit|(trappist.net))

Wisdom of the Christian Mystics - Saturday & Sunday, January 9&10

(Two Sessions: Saturday 9:00 AM & Sunday 10:30 AM)

(Br. Elias & Carl McColman)

From the Desert Fathers to Julian of Norwich to Thomas Merton, Christian history is filled with stories of men and women who experienced a profound sense of God's presence in their lives. Can the teachings of the mystics still speak to us today? The mystics themselves would say "Yes." Furthermore, their message is not just for priests, monks or nuns, but is indeed meant for the entire people of God. With this in mind, during this weekend we will look at several ways that the wisdom of the Christian mystics can provide insight and inspiration for our age, including the universal call to holiness, St. Paul's directive to "pray without ceasing," and the promise from the Psalms to "Be still and know that I am God."

Contemplative Prayer - Saturday, January 16 (Two Sessions: 9:30 AM & 1:30 PM)

(Br. Michael)

Prayer is a loving exchange with God. When we learn to receive the gift of God's presence through loving silence, we are able to develop our personal relationship with Him. One way to receive this gift is through centering prayer, traditionally known as contemplative prayer. This type of prayer enables us to rest in God, leading to a more intimate relationship with Him.

Please visit for more info: [Monastery of the Holy Spirit | \(trappist.net\)](http://MonasteryoftheHolySpirit|(trappist.net))

Social Media policy of the Archdiocese

My dear Brothers,

As we are once again in the midst of a very contentious period with the upcoming runoff elections, I want to take just a moment to remind you that as ordained members of the clergy we should never make any kind of public political statement. You can certainly encourage people to vote but it is completely inappropriate to endorse any position or candidate.

I am aware that all of us have opinions. As clergy however, we are not to share opinions of this sort. If you are identified as clergy or men in formation in any of your social media platforms or in any of your public communications, please keep all of this in mind.

Please read the Archdiocese of Atlanta social media policy [here](#) for more information.

I pray that you all remain safe and blessed during this Advent Season.

“God give you peace.”

Deacon Dennis Dorner Sr.,

Chancellor/Director of the Permanent Diaconate

Please read the latest article from Homiletic & Pastoral Review titled: [Deacons as Apostles for the New Evangelization](#), written by [Deacon Stephen Hilker](#).

National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States of America

The Congregation for the Clergy has approved the second edition of the National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States of America. Below, please see some information provided by Fr. Luke Ballman, Executive Director for the Secretariat of Clergy, Consecrated Life & Vocations of the USCCB, pertaining to this new edition

I am pleased to share that on November 13, 2020, Archbishop José H. Gomez, in his capacity as USCCB President, received correspondence from His Eminence Beniamino Cardinal Stella that the Congregation for the Clergy has approved ad quinquennium the Second Edition of the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States of America*. We still need to go through the process of professional editing, indexing, and publishing before the document will become available. I tentatively anticipate that the 2nd edition of the National Directory will be available mid-2021. I also wanted to take this opportunity to inform you of a few items of note that have been modified from the 1st edition:

- Those recently married should live their married vocation for five years prior to requesting admittance into a permanent diaconate formation program
- For those recently widowed, at least three years should elapse prior to their acceptance into a permanent diaconate formation program.
- Five years should elapse between a convert's or returning Catholic's entry into the Church and his acceptance into a permanent diaconate formation program.
- The aspirant stage of formation will ordinarily last two years
- The pastoral care of a newly ordained deacon extends for the first five years after ordination.”

Trip to the Holy Land

Hello my brother deacons,

Do you have cabin fever as bad as I do? Thanks be to God we are just weeks away from the Pfizer vaccine being released! Now is the time to plan for that Holy Land Trip we have been discussing - not for the upcoming January but January 2022. This price is unbelievable. There is a base price and an additional optional trip extension to Greece visiting the communities founded by St Paul!

When we get 40 people we are shutting it down. So let me know if you are interested in going. Fill out the attached and mail your deposit directly to me and I will forward it to Good Shepherd.

Please feel free to circulate this among the Deacon and Deacon candidate community.

Best wishes and blessings!

Deacon Keith Kolodziej

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FOR THE SICK AND SUFFERING

Feb 25 Marianne Stuber, sister-in-law of Deacon Vic Taylor
March 9 Dr. Alice Taylor, wife of Deacon Vic Taylor
March 20 Donna Harkins, wife of Deacon Chrys Harkins
March 23 Kathy Hampton, wife of Deacon Bill Hampton
April 6 Deacon Bill Bevacqua
April 9 Max, grandson of Deacon Charles Carignan
April 22 Deacon Steve Beers
April 27 Donna Harkins, wife of Deacon Chrys Harkins
May 1 Deacon Dave Fragale
May 1 Deacon William Jindrich
May 7 Judith Taylor, sister-in-law of Deacon Vic Taylor
May 13 Deacon Augustin Pierre-Louis
June 9 John Mitchell, father of Deacon Mark Mitchell
June 29 Peggy Sholander, wife of Deacon Mark Sholander
July 2 Michael Doppel-Slater, grandson of Deacon Paul Doppel
July 2 Trey Smith, great-grandson of Deacon Richard Tolcher
July 13 Susie Nemchik, wife of Deacon Tom Nemchik
August 13 Joseph "Joe Pat" Rhodes
August 17 Lucy Popiak, mother-in-law of Deacon Bruce Goodwin
August 28 Deacon Al McHugh
Sept 1 Deacon Ed Krise
Sept 7 Deacon Jim Bishop
Sept 9 Deacon Bob Klein
Sept 16 Deacon Scott Parker
Sept 21 Deacon Joseph "Joe Pat" Rhodes
Sept 11 Dr. Alice Taylor, wife of Deacon Vic Taylor
Sept 21 Susan Walter, wife of Deacon Tom Walter
Sept 28 Will Mitchell, son of Deacon Mark Mitchell
Sept 30 Barb Metzger, widow of Deacon Tom Metzger
Oct 1 Liz Schueth, mother of Deacon Paul Schueth
Oct 15 Deacon Jim Bishop
Oct 26 Deacon Felix Marrero
Oct 28 Deacon Joe Eustace
Oct 28 Jim Kelly, nephew of Deacon Joe Eustace
Nov 10 Carl Taylor, Jr., son of Carl Taylor, MIF
Nov 19 Deacon Randy Ory
Nov 20 Margaret, daughter of Deacon Alfred Mitchell
Nov 25 Kevin St. Michel, son of Deacon Ron St. Michel
Nov 28 Deacon Al McHugh
Dec 14 Robert McEver, father-in-law of Deacon Tim Kirksey
Dec 29 Lucia Londono, wife of Deacon Luis Londono

FOR THOSE THAT HAVE DIED

- Feb 24 Death of Valerie Casey, wife of Deacon Bernie Casey
- March 13 Death of Mary Rolfe, sister of Deacon Dennis Carazza
- March 15 Death of Ricardo Ponce, brother of Deacon Igor Ponce
- March 23 Death of JoAnn Shipley, mother-in-law of Deacon Ron Leidenfrost
- March 27 Death of Betty Hanson, mother of Deacon David Hanson
- April 2 Death of Kevin Kelsey, son of Deacon Don Kelsey
- April 8 Death of Jackie Williams, wife of Deacon Ken Williams
- April 20 Death of Chester Gorman
- May 1 Death of Carrole St. Michel, wife of Deacon Ron St. Michel
- May 22 Death of John Ryan, father of Deacon Tom Ryan
- May 22 Death of Lucy Goodly, mother of Deacon Nicholas Goodly
- June 14 Death of Deacon Robert G. Readdy
- June 14 Death of Deacon Thomas Silvestri
- June 20 Death of Dorothy Chandonia, mother of Dr. Ron Chandonia
- July 2 Death of Jim Martin, father of Deacon John Martin
- July 9 Death of Juanito Narvaez, brother of Deacon Jose Narvaez
- August 28 Death of Felicia Cotina Toca-Moran, daughter of Deacon Frederick Toca
- August 10 Death of Mildred Neslin, mother of Deacon Stuart Neslin
- Sept 3 Death of Mary Lou Puetz, mother of Deacon John Puetz
- Sept 6 Death of Deacon Jim Stone
- Oct 14 Death of Domingo Pagan, brother-in-law of Deacon Jose Narvaez
- Oct 15 Death of Deacon Thomas McGrane
- Oct 16 Death of Deacon Francis Head
- Nov 3 Death of Deacon Jerry Connell
- Nov 12 Death of Kenya Griffin, daughter of Deacon Chester Griffin
- Nov 15 Death of Debbie Johnson, sister-in-law of Deacon Chris Andronaco
- Nov 27 Death of Deacon Stuart Mead
- Nov 29 Death of Clara Braun, sister of Deacon Benedict Gross
- Dec 1 Death of Peggy Colombian, mother-in-law of Deacon Brad Krupa
- Dec 16 Death of Mary Ann Nemchik, mother of Deacon Tom Nemchik
- Dec 22 Death of Reverend Bernard Byrne, uncle of Deacon Mike Byrne
- Dec 23 Death of Robert Sendziak, Sr., uncle of Deacon Chris Andronaco
- Dec 26 Death of Deacon Richard Suever
- Dec 29 Death of Deacon Scott Sparks