

THE Deacon Servant

OFFICES OF DEACON SERVICES | DIACONATE FORMATION | ARCHDIOCESE of MILWAUKEE



ARCHDIOCESE of MILWAUKEE
DIACONATE
Where love becomes service.

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DIRECTOR'S REPORT



Deacon Jim Starke

The phone calls always tend to start the same. "This is Jim Starke from Deacon Services. I'm calling to introduce myself, ask how you are doing, and see if there is anything you need." If you are over 75 years old, you

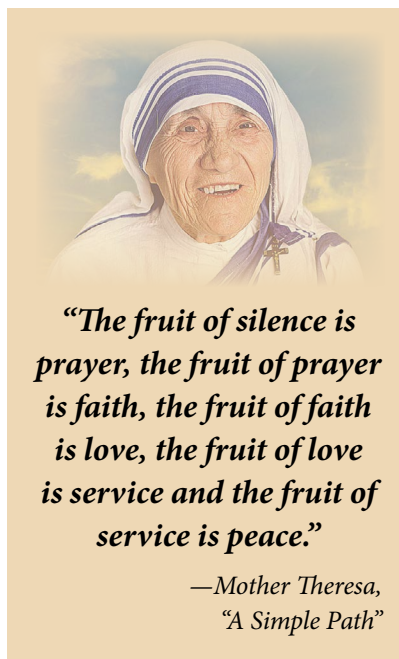
probably received this call or listened to the message on your voicemail. After the opening introduction, the Holy Spirit takes over. Some calls last only 10 or so minutes. Some calls last as long as an hour. I have been blessed over the last three months to listen to stories of how the Holy Spirit has worked through the lives of so many holy and generous deacons. When people ask me if I am enjoying the new position, I find myself replying, "I feel so blessed."

When friends, family and parishioners ask me what I do as Director of Deacon Services, I still have trouble coming up with a concise answer. As with so many aspects of diaconal ministry, people outside our community have a hard time relating. I have found that the title 'Director' is more of an archdiocese construct than a description of the position's responsibility. Directing

deacons is like directing the wind. Speaking to the older/wiser deacons, I quickly realized that there is a spirit who directs the deacons, but He doesn't have an office down at the archdiocese. If you haven't experienced the presence of that director, you just would not understand.

When a deacon or his spouse asks me what I do in my new position, the answer is much

easier to explain. The title deacon derives from the Greek word "diaconal," which means "service among others." Deacon Services simply serves the servants who serve amongst others. Granted, it sounds a little clunky. However, it is a way to keep focused on what's truly important. The Church can either support those efforts of the deacon or create obstacles. Hopefully, to perform its job well, the Office of Deacon Services focuses on the former and works to eliminate the latter.



"The fruit of silence is prayer, the fruit of prayer is faith, the fruit of faith is love, the fruit of love is service and the fruit of service is peace."

—Mother Theresa,
"A Simple Path"

From a faith perspective, the office focuses on being a resource to the deacon community — to answer technical questions, connect deacons with experts who can assist them, help them become more effective servants. Over the next year, the office will be focusing on growing the post-ordination formation program to better form our newly ordained deacons.

THE DISCERNMENT OF THE CALL



Deacon Dale Nees

“Here, an individual initially reflects upon the nature of his perceived call.”¹

Spiritual guidance is central to discernment, beginning with

the individual’s pastor and other parish staff as special resources. Since most of those who inquire about the diaconate are married, attention must be given to discussing the possibility of a vocation with their wives and families. But the National Directory indicates that accompaniment is vital for suitable discernment to take place. It clearly states that: “... inquiry and eventual application for entrance into diaconal formation constitute not just a personal and family journey,” but that “the Church must accompany it.” (No. 179)

The parish is typically where most inquirers experience the Church. Therefore, it is the members of a parish, especially the pastor, that have a responsibility to invite those who may be qualified to serve as ordained ministers. Also, community agencies



that carry out the Church’s mission of charity and social justice may propose possible nominees from among their staff.

Eventually inquiry about the diaconate and the formation program includes the diocesan Church. That is why there are information and discernment sessions hosted throughout the Archdiocese of Milwaukee from now until about Thanksgiving of this year. These provide an inquirer the opportunity to further explore the criteria and steps involved for a diaconal vocation. The Office for Diaconate Formation also provides intakes as an opportunity to counsel

and help an inquirer in his decision go forward with a Canonical Interview. Following this interview, if appropriate, the inquirer is presented and endorsed by his pastor. After endorsement, he will receive the application from our office. Upon submission of his application, the formal process for admission begins. The applicant’s initial discernment continues with a focus on his abilities and potential for ordained ministry. Together the applicant and the diocesan Church enter an intense screening process.

Even in pursuing admission, it is readily apparent why accompaniment is so important in discerning a call. We appreciate all that the deacons and their wives and families of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee do to accompany those beginning the process of inquiry and potential admission!

Deacon Dale Nees '09

¹United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. *The National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States of America: Second Edition*, Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2021.

► DIRECTOR’S REPORT *(continued from page 1)*

From a hope perspective, the office focuses on being a liturgical support for the archdiocese. It is important for our community that deacons continue to play a visible role in the larger public celebration of the Mass such as the Chrism Mass, ethnic festivals, and charitable events. The office will work to make sure those events are supported.

From a love perspective, the office focuses on continuing to build up the relationships within the deacon community

including spouses and widows, to raise up the prayers of those in need, to encourage participation in the deacon community events, and to remember those we have lost. The office will also focus on encouraging the community to spend less time married to the altar and attending parish committee assignments. The archbishop is continually pushing deacons to spend more time serving outside the parish walls, to get out of our comfort zone, and go where the Holy Spirit is calling us.

Deacon Jim Starke

“LOVE IS SERVICE.” “AMOR ES SERVICIO.”
 “ANG PAG-IBIG AY PAGSISILBI.” “YÊU THƯƠNG QUA PHỤC VỤ.”



*Dcn. Manuel
Maldonado-
Villalobos*

English, Spanish, Filipino and Vietnamese. Four languages, four cultures, same meaning. In our formation program we have the blessing of having this richness of cultures. All of us gather under one program to discern and become servant leaders for our Church.

When we look at these gifts of cultural diversity, we realize that the Church is bigger than one cultural

reality and calls us to form servant leaders that are open to a multicultural and diverse Church. “Deacons are called to serve a multiracial, multiethnic, multicultural Church. This changing face of the Catholic Church in the United States of America has a significant effect on diaconal formation ...” (Cfr. 155 NDFMLPD) This statement of the National Directory calls us as deacons, and also as formators, to be sensitive to the needs of our brothers and sisters of different cultural backgrounds. It also invites us to accept the reality that our Church is a universal Church, and we need to enculturate ourselves to these changing times. To be able to express and know our brothers’ faith traditions and languages opens not only doors in the Church but also doors of service in our hearts and community.

In our formation program we have workshops and training that covers this multicultural reality. Workshops on “Culture in-service,” Latino, Native-American, African American, Asian and Deaf Apostolate are some of the experiences offered to our candidates in formation to foster a strong awareness of our rich faith diversity. One of the workshops that by experience has been a fruitful one is Pastoral Spanish, where the candidates practice the basics of Spanish pronunciation and pastoral approaches to be of service to the growing Hispanic-Latino Church in United States. Learning the basic prayers, blessings, the Sign of the Cross, or even a “Buenos Días” or “Hola,” has been key for some of our deacons to welcome the stranger. When deacons come back to visit our program or when I encounter them in ministry, they express how important “the torture” of practicing Spanish (as someone said once) has been for

their ministry. They mentioned that when you welcome, or pray the Our Father in Spanish with them, their ministry is more fruitful, and everyone feels welcome. Love is service, and when we offer this love in the person’s own native language, this service bears bigger fruits. This is a reality that we as clergy and servants need to understand and foster. “Recognizing the cultural diversity of the Catholic Church in the United States of America and incorporating experiences and an appreciation of it all enhance the present and future ministerial effectiveness of each participant.” (Cfr. 155 NDFMLPD)

Our formation program opened the doors a long time ago to pray, to worship, to praise in different languages creating an environment where everyone belongs. I never imagined that one day I would be singing in Hmong, Vietnamese, or seeing myself praising God in sign language, besides English and Spanish. I am looking forward to also praying in Filipino, since one of our aspirants and his family is from this culture/country.

We need to see our ministries not as “closing doors” due to the boundaries of languages, but rather we need to see our formation and our ministries as an opportunity to evangelize in our brothers’ culture and languages. In that way we can foster a service that is welcoming. We need to understand the norms of the National Directory when they state: “The cultures and traditions of those in diaconal formation — mirroring as they do the rich diversity of gifts in the Church — need to be respected and valued. Formation, therefore (and I will say, also ministry), must be sensitive and adapted to the circumstances of different cultures.” (Cfr. 166, Norm 9 NDFMLPD)

Love is service, and this service is greatest when we foster a multicultural, multilingual church. Our formation program is doing our part. My hope is that, after formation, we continue to grow in awareness of the gifts of our diverse Church to continue to serve our communities and beyond.

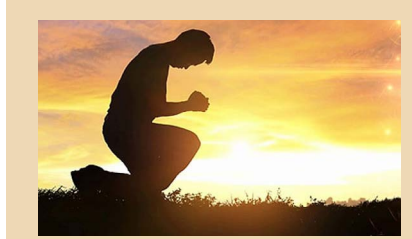
Dcn. Manuel Maldonado-Villalobos

PASTORAL FORMATION PLACEMENTS



Maritza Espino

The “National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States of America” is very explicit about the different areas of formation (intellectual, human, pastoral and spiritual) that must take place as the aspirants and



***If you want to teach,
I must allow myself
to be taught.***

***If you want love, I must
allow myself to be loved.***

***If you want to heal, I must
allow myself to be healed.***

***If you want to minister,
I must allow other to
minister to me.***

— Rev. William T. Donovan, Ph.D.

small group members and to the Office of Diaconate Formation team. Fr. James Lobacz has trained five deacons who serve as theological reflection facilitators for our aspirants and candidates. This is when the aspirants and candidates experience pastoral, human and spiritual growth — this is when they get to actually do hands-on theology and, of course, mutuality in ministry, in which the aspirant and candidate learn and grow as well as the person being served.

Intellectual formation becomes real in actual pastoral practice. Placements are transformational experiences that help the aspirants and candidates to discern their calling to the Diaconate. Placements serve as opportunities for them to be transformed and discover strengths, weaknesses and limitations to serve God’s people through their Diakonia entrusted to the Church.

Maritza Espino

candidates continue answering their call to become permanent deacons in the near future. I will focus on the area of pastoral formation, which at this time is my responsibility in collaboration with the Office of Diaconate Formation team.

No. 135. Pastoral Formation — *an integral formation must relate the human, spiritual and intellectual dimension to pastoral practice.* “The whole formation imparted to [the participants] ... aims at preparing them to enter into communion with the charity of Christ ... Hence their formation is its different aspects must have a fundamentally pastoral character.” Within that context, the pastoral dimension in initial formation is not merely an apprenticeship to familiarize the participant in diaconal formation with some pastoral techniques.

Its aim, however, is to initiate the participant into the sensitivity of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus, who came to serve and not be served.

Both aspirants as well as candidates will be doing parish pastoral outreach placements that will provide opportunities for them to directly connect and serve people from different social, economic and faith backgrounds. As part of their preparation for their placements, they submit a request form with three options based on their research on what the parish offers under their Human Concerns Committee for Parish Outreach. The next step is for the team at the Office of Diaconate Formation to decide which ministry out of the three will be the best fit for the aspirant or candidate. The aspirant or candidate then writes their learning agreements in which they must include their personal goals as well as formational goals under all four dimensions of formation. In fact, no. 138 in the National Directory describes: “Supervised pastoral formation placements should be designed to and adapted to the needs of the individual participant, helping him to gradually and appropriately experience in his pastoral placement what he has learned in his studies.”

In addition to their parish pastoral outreach placements, participants also journal and write theological reflections which are to be submitted to their theological reflection facilitators, their

KNOW OUR DEACON



Deacon Ed Blaze and his wife Dorothy.

Dcn. Ed is the oldest deacon in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. He will turn 93 in July. Dcn. Ed was ordained in the Class of 1975. When asked what advice he has for the recently ordained deacons, Dcn. Ed simply stated, “The Holy Spirit. Seek out the Holy Spirit. Trust the Holy Spirit.”

REST IN PEACE

✠ **Dcn. Charles E. “Chuck” Elden Hankins Jr.**, age 65, of Yukon, Oklahoma, passed away Friday, Feb. 3, 2023. Chuck was born May 15, 1957, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He was the son of the late Charles Elden Hankins Sr. and Martha Elvina Hankins. Dcn. Chuck graduated from Waldron High School in Waldron, Arkansas, and went on to live a full life for many years in Fort Smith, Arkansas, with a brief but full experience in Waukesha, Wisconsin, and choosing to retire from his duties as a deacon with the Catholic Church in Yukon, Oklahoma.

Dcn. Chuck was originally ordained Permanent Deacon Dec. 14, 2002, at the Church of Christ the King in Little Rock, Arkansas, by Bishop J. Peter Satain.

Dcn. Chuck was assigned to St. Boniface Church in Fort Smith, Arkansas, from 2002 to 2004; to Christ the King Church in Fort Smith, Arkansas, from 2005 to 2006; and back to St. Boniface from 2006 to 2010. In 2010, Dcn. Chuck moved to Oklahoma to serve at St. Eugene Catholic Church. Dcn. Chuck moved to Wisconsin in 2014. With the permission of Bishops Anthony B. Taylor of the Diocese of Little Rock and Archbishop Jerome E. Listecki of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Dcn. Chuck entered into a covenant with St. William Parish and St. John Neumann Parish in Waukesha, Wisconsin. On Nov. 28, 2016, Dcn. Chuck was incardinated as a deacon into the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. In Dcn. Chuck’s seven years serving the Catholic Community of Waukesha, he ministered in the areas of adult faith formation, marriage preparation, and hospital ministry at Waukesha Memorial, along with preaching, baptisms, weddings and funerals outside of Mass. Dcn. Chuck retired from ministry and moved back to Oklahoma in May of 2021.

Dcn. Chuck is survived by his children Jennifer Elaine Jennings, Charles Patrick Hankins, David (Kelly) Michael Hankins; 12 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; and sisters Melissa Honel and Cindy Taylor.

Services were held at Edwards Funeral Home on Feb. 17, 2023. He was interred at Rose Lawn/Holy Cross Cemetery in the Columbarium.

May he rest in peace.



THE LORD’S CALL

By Dcn. John Monday © JPM 9/15/2018

Hush, listen —
it is the Lord
who is with you,
seeking you out —
calling you in the
silence of the night.

Reaching into the
very center of
your being
and touching you
with the gentleness
of God’s love.

Inviting you
to be more
than you
ever thought
you could
be.

By:
living more fully,
loving more deeply,
caring more profoundly,
acting more bravely,
and using what
you have been given
in ways more generous
than you ever imagined.

Listen to the
voice of Jesus,
in the wind and
the voices of children
and the cries of the poor.

Listen to Jesus
call your name
as he says,
“Come follow me:
Let us feed the hungry,
clothe the naked,
heal the sick,
care for the poor,
comfort the broken-hearted
and make God’s kingdom
a reality.

Come, follow me:
And I will
show you
what you
were meant
to be
and fill
your heart
with joy.

Come, follow me.”

DEACON SENATE: JANUARY/MARCH 2023

Since the last publication of the Deacon Servant Newsletter, the council has met Jan. 18 and March 15. Both meetings were held via Zoom. Below are some of the more important points of note for each of the meetings.

JAN. 18, 2023

- Dcn. Dale Nees stressed the need to firm up dates and locations for the upcoming Deacon Information and Discernment sessions. The dates will be published on the archdiocese's website and in the quarterly newsletter, "The Cincture."
- There are currently 11 candidates in the Class of 2024 and 11 aspirants. We anticipate that another aspirant who is currently on leave of absence will be returning in the summer.
- A new committee was formed: Formation/Family Committee. The mission is to provide a reliable formation that promotes the steady growth of Permanent Deacons as servant leaders. The objective was to ensure that both diaconate formation and post ordination formation adequately consider the impact formation has on the lives and spirituality of both the deacon/ deacon candidates and their spouses and children. The committee met Jan. 19 to review the charter.
- Districts 4, 5, and 12 are continuing to prepare for Deacon Day on April 22.
- The council thanked Dcn. Mike Chmielewski for his dedicated services to the deacon community and to the Deacon Council specifically. We offered Mike and Mary our prayers and best wishes as they begin this new chapter in their journey.
- The council was advised that Dcn. Jim Starke was assigned as the new Director of Deacon Services. Jim will continue his responsibilities as president of the Deacon Council until the officer rotation scheduled for July.
- Dcn. Mike Chmielewski expressed his appreciation to everyone. Dcn. Mike stated, "It has been a joy to serve." He will continue to be involved but just not in a leadership role. Dcn. Mike encouraged all the deacons to pray and stay in touch with deacons, wives and widows who are having health issues.
- The fundamental role of the individual district meetings was discussed. It was determined that the goals and

objectives of the bimonthly meetings were not clear. A proposal was made to review the clergy documents and write a white paper on the goals and objectives of district meetings. Once agreed upon, it would be distributed to the individual districts for review.

MARCH 15, 2023

Below are some of the more important points of note for each of the meetings:

- Dcn. Dale Nees continued to stress the need to firm up dates and locations for the upcoming Deacon Information and Discernment sessions. The dates will be published on the archdiocese's website and in the quarterly newsletter, "The Cincture."
- There are currently 11 candidates in the Class of 2024 and 11 aspirants. We anticipate that another aspirant who is currently on leave of absence will be returning in the summer.
- The Formation and Family Committee met on Feb. 9. The charter was amended and approved. The new five-year curriculum was approved and will be sent to Archbishop ListECKI for approval. The next meeting will be May 11, 2023. The committee will review the Wives' Formation Program and start to discuss changes to the Post-Ordination Formation Program.
- Fr. Nathan sent along a reminder that stole fees are considered taxable income. Deacons may begin receiving 1099s from funeral homes for services rendered. Work with your parishes and tax accountants.
- A discussion was held on how to make the deacon community more accessible and welcoming to deacons of various ethnicities. Dcn. Jim Starke will present to the council data extracted from the database of deacons identifying the various ethnicities of the current deacon community.
- The Post-Ordination Formation Program is being revised to meet the requirements of the national directory. The program will be going from three years to five years starting with the Class of 2022. Dcn. Jim Starke and the Formation and Family Committee are working to develop the new program over the next year.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 17, 2023. The plan is to meet in person.

Prayer Requests

Dcn. Steve Kramer '94

Dcn. Al Lazaga '92

Nellie Lebron, wife of
Dcn. Gregorio Lebron '90

Dcn. Don Lydolph '81

Dcn. Troy Major '02

Cindy Nosecek, wife of
Dcn. Gary Nosecek '14

Dcn. Greg Petro '12

Amy Starke, wife of
Dcn. Jim Starke '16

Jean Surges, wife of
Dcn. Tom Surges '79

RECENTLY DECEASED AND THEIR FAMILIES

Donna Peterson, wife of
Dcn. Jim Peterson '90 — Jan. 23, 2023

Dcn. Chuck Hankins '02 — Feb. 3,
2023

Mary Elaine Milbauer, wife of
Dcn. Richard Milbauer '96 —
March 11, 2023



DATES TO REMEMBER

April 22, 2023

Deacon Day 2023, Bishop Richard Sklba & Fr. Tom Suriano, St. Dominic, Brookfield

May 13, 2023

Post Ordination Formation, Session 3 for Class of 2020 / MMCPC, 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.

June 3, 2023

Post Ordination Formation, Session 1 for Class of 2022 / MMCPC, 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.

October 22, 2023

2023 Memorial Mass, 2 p.m., Bishop Jim Schuerman, St. Katharine Drexel, Beaver Dam

November 3-5, 2023

Deacon Retreat, Redemptorist, Dcn. Larry Normann directing, Bishop Haines, Saturday Mass presider, Fr. Nathan Reesman, Sunday Mass presider



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