

Deacon Talk

COUNCIL of DEACONS NEWSLETTER | ARCHDIOCESE of MILWAUKEE



DIACONATE FORMATION
Where love becomes service.

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DIRECTOR'S REPORT



Dcn. Mike Chmielewski

Greetings Deacon Family! We are beyond the mid-point of August and with that nearing the end of summer. Families are gearing up for the new school year for children and grandchildren. Teachers are back into work

mode. Parishes are preparing for all the program starts for the new year. Although the end of summer can be a bit sad...it is Wisconsin and winter is not far off...there is also a sense of excitement for what the new year will bring.

So it is with the Diaconate here in Milwaukee. On September 8, seven new men will be ordained Permanent Deacons by Archbishop Listecki. More than 4 years of prayer, discernment, and study will culminate at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist for the seven, their spouses, and

families. We welcome with great joy and anticipation: Doug (Catherine) Gundlach, St. Joseph, Racine; Mike (Mary) Hoffman, St. Thomas Aquinas, Waterford; Jim (Rhonda) Matthias, St. Dominic, Brookfield; Anton (Suzanne) Nickolai, Immaculate Conception/ St. Charles, Burlington, St. Joseph, Lyons; Larry (Mary) Ramsey, St. Leonard, Muskego; Moualee (Nang) Thao, St. Michael, Milwaukee; Tim (Sue) Waldoch, St. Gregory the Great, Milwaukee. As we share their joy we also pray that the Spirit continue to guide and grace their ministry.

September will also find the end of Deacon John Ebel's 18 years in the Deacon Formation Program, the last 10 as the Director. John has been crucial in aligning the Milwaukee formation program with the National Directory and the guidelines and expectations of the USCCB. It was a giant task but one that was well done by

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DEACON SENATE

The Deacon Senate met on May 16, 2018 at the Cousins Center. Deacons present: Starke, Nees, Wiese, Bowen, Copson, Schneider, Jansen, Paczkowski, Campbell, and Chmielewski. Excused: Ebel, Petro. Opening prayer led by Scott Wiese. We then formally welcomed Jim Starke as the new rep for Districts 6/10/13.

Randy Nohl from the Synod Implementation Office was our guest presenter. He provided an update on the upcoming presentation of Amazing Parishes scheduled for 10/17-10/19

in Milwaukee. He also presented us with two important future activities: Saturday 4/6/19 (9AM – Noon) there will be an Archdiocesan Human Concerns Summit at the Cousins Center. Also, September 22-29, 2019 has been designated as a "Week of Service" set aside to highlight the great service offered throughout the Archdiocese. Watch for more details on both of these events.

Discussion items during the remainder of the

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

Dcn. John and his staff. We send Dcn. John off with our deepest appreciation for his significant contributions to the Permanent Diaconate in Milwaukee. We also send along our prayers for him and Maryann in this new stage of life... **RETIREMENT!**

With news of Dcn. John's retirement comes the excitement of welcoming Deacon Dale Nees '09 as the new Director of Deacon Formation. Dcn. Dale brings a wealth of experience and knowledge from the nursing, business, formation and deacon world. Dcn. Dale is very excited about this new challenge and I believe will be a wonderful new leader. We extend our prayers and support to Dcn. Dale and his wife Barb as they begin a new chapter in life.

With every ending comes new beginnings and we give thanks and praise to our God who walks with us in all we do! Peace to all!

*Dcn. Mike Chmielewski***► DEACON SENATE***(continued from page 1)*

meeting included: a detailed financial report that continues to be a work in progress as Scott Campbell pulls together the history of our money flow. Current balance is \$10,651.

The review of Deacon Day 2018 (4/14) was very positive. The Senate agreed to send St. James Parish, our host, a check for \$200 as they hosted our speaker Dcn. Bill Hampton. We also agreed to make a \$500 donation to Catholic Relief Services in lieu of a speaker fee and transportation costs (all provided by CRS)

A Retention Policy for Senate documents (primarily financial records) was presented by Mike Bowen. After discussion, Mike will further revise the document and re-introduce it at our next meeting.

We also had some discussion about if and how we might celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Permanent Diaconate (2018). The Senate

encouraged continued exploration of a possible celebration. The Director will follow up with trying to schedule such an event.

We also discussed the proper celebration and send off for Dcn. John Ebel on his September retirement. There will be a deacon celebration on 6/30/2018 at the Cousins Center. The Senate did approve a financial donation for the gathering as well as for a gift to John from the Deacon community.

Also placed on the Agenda was discussion of deacon funeral planning and in particular the attire of the deceased deacon. Funeral information will be provided at the next Senate meeting.

The meeting closed with prayer before 8 PM. The next scheduled meeting is 7/18/18 but will be cancelled unless significant issues arise. The most likely next meeting will take place on 9/19/18, 6 PM, at the Cousins Center.

*Dcn. Mike Chmielewski***DEACON PERSONNEL BOARD**

The Deacon Personnel Board convened on Saturday May 26, 2018 at the Cousins Center. In attendance: Dcns. Gulig, Nosacek, Campbell, Schneider, Stanula, Chmielewski, and Fr. Herda.

The meeting opened with prayer, welcome and introductions, and then approval of the January minutes. The first topic for discussion were the deacon specific issues. The discussion included review of recent covenant renewals (8), status changes (7), and overdue covenants (12). Most of the overdue covenants were situations of pastor changes, new parish configurations, or new assignments and thus there were few worrisome

issues. There was discussion about 2 deacons nearing non-compliance with Formation Reports and a third whose posts on social media were drawing attention. The Board asked that the Director follow up with these issues.

The Board heard from Fr. Jerry about the Priest Placement beginning a 3-5 year planning process for priest assignments. He expects that this plan will eventually include discussion of diaconal presence, needs, or even potential parish assignments. Fr. Jerry also suggested that as part of the preparation of new pastors, information about diaconal roles and ministries should be shared with them.

The Board then discussed the upcoming ordination class (9/8/18). The Board was reminded that all first year (and second year) covenants are to be signed at a meeting that includes the new deacon, wife, pastor, Deacon Services Director, and a Personnel Board rep. Signing schedules can be a challenge and generally revolve around pastor schedules.

The meeting closed with reminders of important dates coming up and then prayer. The next Personnel Board meeting is scheduled for Saturday 10/6/2018, 9-11 AM, at the Cousins Center.

Deacon Mike Chmielewski

2018 NATIONAL DIACONATE CONGRESS

Greetings brother deacons and wives. I had the wonderful occasion of attending this incredible milestone commemorating and celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Restoration of the Permanency of the Diaconate in the United States. Even better I found myself in the great company of other Milwaukee Archdiocesan deacons and their wives: Marla & John Gavin and Kathy & Mike Burch...photogenic group! The five of us were among the 2,800 plus attendees.

The theme of the congress was “*Christ the Servant: Yesterday, Today, Forever.*” We enjoyed the wisdom of many fine speakers expounding on this theme throughout the four-day experience. We heard from Deacons Keating and Ditewig whose scholarly books we have read during pre and post ordination formation. The Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Christophe Pierre and the President of the USCCB Daniel Cardinal DiNardo Archbishop of Galveston-Houston also offered keynote addresses. There were other notable speakers and workshop leaders to numerous to mention individually.

Most liturgies were coordinated by the Director of Liturgy for the Archdiocese of New Orleans. The Masses incorporated Morning Prayer and were each sponsored by a different Archdiocese. The large number of attendees could not be accommodated in Cathedral-Basilica of St. Louis, King of France. But an optional Black Catholic Mass Experience sponsored by the Council of African American Deacons of the Archdiocese of New Orleans was held there Monday evening. We walked about 8 blocks to the Cathedral-Basilica where we were regaled by a soulful Gospel Choir that prepared us to participate before we began. The Celebrant was Bishop Fernand J, Cheri, III, OFM. The homilist was Deacon Lawrence



Houston who exposed us to the special uniqueness Black preaching. It was extremely powerful and was the first time I witnessed a unanimous standing ovation. At the end of about two hours Bishop Cheri who provided some closing remarks. He said: “This is our typical thing...” and then went on to thank everyone there that made experience possible.

There were nearly 60 vendors that helped me to update my library. One book I made sure to acquire was the just released CARA accumulative report from 1968 to 2018. As I begin my new role as Director of Diaconate Formation for the Milwaukee Archdiocese I am very interested in seeing how our own experience compares with others in the United States.

It was an adventure taking in the French Quarter for the first time. Listening to the music of aspiring artists as well as some that were outright quirky... to see creativity alongside profound homelessness. Even to appreciate the cleverness and straightforwardness of

the shoe shine guy who noticed I wasn't wearing tennis shoes. Our group found several nice food venues to enjoy and notably my first beignet (French doughnut) as evidenced by the residual powdered sugar that made my beard look greyer than normal. Then there was the National Association of Diaconal Directors (NADD) Business Meeting which besides a great meal brought me up to speed on the current goals and financial health of this important association. Suffice to say that on my return home I had go lower than my baseline eating habits.

Tuesday was a special event for 600 people that I managed to sign up early enough to attend. It was a trip to the National World War II Museum which was followed by a reception and a presentation on Life in the Priester block in Dachau. The speaker shared the story about a Transitional Deacon who was ordained a priest inside the concentration

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WITH LOVING GRATITUDE

Dear Brother Deacons and Sisters,

It is with loving gratitude that I wish to say thank you to those of you who attended my retirement party on June 30, 2018, or sent cards, gifts, email notes, as well as to those who called to express many kind thoughts, memories and sentiments.

I want to especially, publically thank Manuel Maldonado and Charmaine Pfeiffer who, with the assistance of Mike Chmielewski and the generosity of the Deacon Senate, executed a truly marvelous reception for me. The food was great, the beverages refreshing, and the decorations – so celebratory!

However, most importantly the expression and outpouring of love, thanksgiving and good wishes was overwhelming to me. It was so wonderful to see so many of my brothers and their wives, faculty, friends and my family reminding me of how fortunate and blessed I have been over these past 18 years. To look out at everyone, while Mike presented to me a plaque of appreciation and other gifts, seeing the Lord's handiwork in all of you before me was awesome, and most humbling! That evening was truly one of the highlights of my life and working career because of each of you – thank you sincerely!

May the Lord continue to bless all of you "...for the good



work He has begun in you!"

P.S. Please know my personal "thank you" notes are forthcoming!

*Fraternally yours in Christ the Servant,
Deacon John Ebel*

► DIACONATE CONGRESS

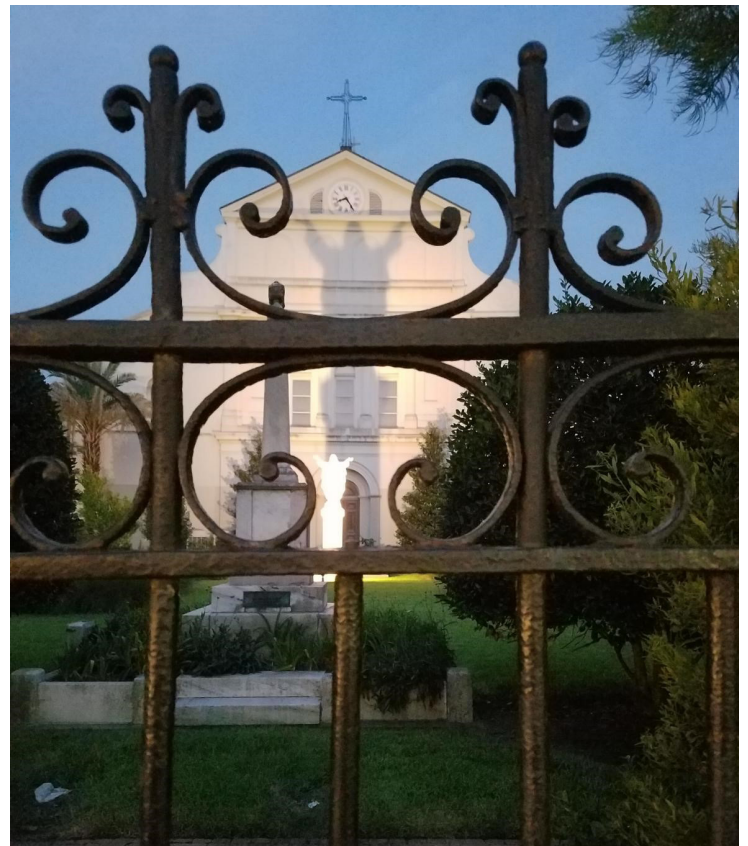
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camp. Just think about the challenges involved in making that happen under the very noses of Nazi guards. We were also given deeper insights into how much Dachau influenced the restoration of the permanency of the Diaconate and how God is present especially in the worst of circumstances. Those that survived would spur others on who would ultimately vote on the matter at the Second Vatican Council.

It was a very transformative and fruitful time where I was able to meet colleagues across the nation, collect some business cards, and look forward to future dialogue and learning with the full realization that in 50 years much was accomplished in the United States, yet much still stands in need attention.

Lastly, upon my return home I have managed to catch a glimpse of places I recognized from our walks on the TV series NCIS: New Orleans. Here's one I thought you would really appreciate taken from the back side of the Cathedral-Basilica of St. Louis, King of France.

*With Fraternal Charity,
Deacon Dale Nees*



“ANSWERING THE CALL” IN AFRICA – CONTINUED

My exit visit with the Chancellor went well. He spoke of being impressed by my willingness to go to the outer reaches of the Diocese and had heard favorable comments from all the priests that I had interacted with. He expressed best wishes from the Bishop, who was sorry he could not be here for my departure and was sending his blessings for a safe trip home.

When Father Chris arrived, it was very sad leaving the area. I had experienced so many different things while visiting, but leaving all the faith filled-people was emotional. Yes, there was true sadness in leaving Awka. I knew it would likely be the last time I see both of the mothers that I had grown very fond of. I will always remember interacting with all the children and the priests of Awka Diocese but left filled with hope that soon I would be home with my own family.

Our ride to Lagos was laborious but our driver was able to get us through with no incidents. We were happy to get out of the car and spend that evening with our goddaughter's sister (Georgie) and enjoy the last day and a half with her and the

rest of the family.

Twenty-five years ago, Lin and I assisted a young Nigerian girl (Gurtie) get out of the Navy and on her way back to medical school to continue her residency program. She became our goddaughter and to this day, we still communicate. She has since become an Infectious Disease Specialist in Baton Rouge, LA. To thank us ... her ailing father sent his two oldest sons to our home in America to invite us to come to see him. That opportunity proved outside my reach until meeting Rev. Ozodi. What I gained from my visits to the richer city communities, commuting across the region, interacting with all the students and orphanages, touring farm villages, and through interaction with the local peoples would take VOLUMES.

These outlying villages are POOR! They live in one-room with dirt floors and cook on the ground on one-burner stoves with coal and bits of wood. There is no cell service, electricity,

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WITH GREAT THANKS AND PRAISE!

The National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States affirms that the diaconal community should offer “comfort and reassurance” to the widowed deacon, as well as to the widowed wife.

In 2005, Jan Telderer, widow of Joseph Telderer, along with Jean and Tom Surges, recognized the need for ministry to the widowed in our own diocese. Jan approached the Deacon Senate with this need, and the Ministry of Care was established.

Jan has provided comfort and guidance to many of our widowed.

Under her leadership, she organized ministry volunteers to walk with the bereaved; offered formation and fellowship; and started a newsletter, doing all with compassion and sincerity.

After these many years of service, Jan has decided to step down from her leadership position on the committee. She will continue to minister to the widowed. We in the diaconal community are very thankful and blessed to have had her in our midst.

Well-done, good and faithful Servant. Many blessings, Jan.

Maryann Ebel, Ministers of Care



DATES TO REMEMBER

ORDINATION, CLASS OF 2018
September 8, 2018, Cathedral

RESPECT LIFE WEEK, October
7-14, 2018....Holy Hour for Life
Prayer

AMAZING PARISH CONFERENCE: October 17-19,
2018, Downtown Milwaukee

MEMORIAL MASS 2018: October 28, 2018, 3 PM,
Bishop Jeff Haines presider, Lumen Christi Parish,
Mequon, District 6/10/13 planning

DEACON RETREAT: November 1-4, 2018,
Redemptorist Retreat Center, Director, Bishop Jim
Schuerman.

**CELEBRATION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE PERMANENT DIACONATE**, Wednesday
12/26/18, 11 AM, Mass with Archbishop ListECKI
presiding, Mater Christi Chapel Cousins Center, followed
by lunch in one of the dining rooms.

DEACON DAY 2019 ...tentative...Saturday 5/4/2019...
St. Martin of Tours, Franklin (District 14/15/16 planning)

REST IN PEACE

† **Deacon Francisco A. Blas** died on July 22, 2018. Dcn. Francisco was born in Mexico City on May 10, 1939. He moved to the United States in 1977 and eventually became a US citizen. He worked as a laborer at Racine Steel for 10 years, and in 1987, he began employment at Grove Gear in Union Grove. He retired from his secular work in 2005.

Francisco married his true love, Florencia, on June 2, 1985 at Cristo Rey Parish, Racine. In addition to Florencia, Francisco is survived by his children Rosanne Machado, Raquel (Victor) Villasenor, and Saula Garza as well as grandchildren Robert (Meghan), Ireland, and Aaliyah. He was preceded in death by his daughter Blanca Aime.

Francisco began his diaconate formation in 1994 at St. Francis Seminary. He was ordained a Permanent Deacon on June 6, 1998 by Archbishop Rembert G. Weakland O.S.B. at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist. Dcn. Francisco was originally covenanted at Cristo Rey Parish in Racine and when Cristo Rey closed he moved to St. Patrick Parish where he remained until his death. Dcn. Francisco was a regular at the altar as well as presiding at Baptisms, Marriages, quinceaneras, and holy hours. His true passion however was visiting the sick and homebound and bringing them communion.

Visitation for Dcn. Francisco took place on Thursday 7/26/18 4-8 PM at the Maresh-Meredith & Acklam Funeral Home in downtown Racine. Additional visitation took place on Friday 7/26 at 10 AM until the Mass of

Christian Burial at Noon at St. Patrick Parish. Bishop James Schuerman was the presider at the Mass with classmate Deacon Jorge Benavente offering the homily. There was a definite feeling of celebration in the prayer with a very good representation of the deacon family. Bishop Schuerman offered the final commendation and the internment followed at Holy Cross Cemetery on Hwy. 32 in Racine.

Please continue to keep Dcn. Francisco in your prayers, as well as Florencia and the Blas family. May he rest in peace!

† **Deacon Kenneth J. Miller** died on June 24, 2018. Dcn. Ken was born in Milwaukee on 6/21/38. He graduated from South Milwaukee High School in 1957. He took some business classes at the Milwaukee Vocational School and eventually spent most of his professional employment at Bucyrus-Erie (1962-1986). He told me that he was very involved in introducing computers at Bucyrus.

He began his diaconate formation in 1975 at St. Francis Seminary. He was ordained a Permanent Deacon on February 6, 1977 by Archbishop William E. Cousins at the Basilica of St. Josaphat, Milwaukee. He was initially covenanted at St. Mary Parish, South Milwaukee. In 1979, he was covenanted at St. John Parish and later in 1979, St. Adalbert Parish, both in South Milwaukee. In 1984, he was assigned to St. Anthony Parish, Milwaukee. In addition to serving at the altar, Ken presided at Baptisms, solemnized

marriages, and was an active teacher in parish religious education.

In October 1986, Ken suffered a severe stroke, which left him significantly disabled for the remainder of his life. He made some attempts to resume diaconal ministry, but his physical limitations were prohibitive. He was placed on sick leave in 1992, and officially retired in July of 2002. Ken spent many of his post stroke years in care facilities. He was never married and had no children. His primary family support came from his sister, Joan, brother-in-law, Joe, and nephew, Jeff. Ken spent the last 2 plus years of his life at Mary Jude Nursing Home in West Allis.

Dcn. Ken's funeral prayer took place on 6/28/18 at Divine Mercy Parish, South Milwaukee. Visitation began at 9 AM followed by the Mass of Christian Burial at 11 AM and then internment at Holy Sepulcher Cemetery.

Thirteen Deacons / wives attended the funeral prayer. Divine Mercy Pastor, Fr. Joseph Sebastian, MCBS presided at the Mass, with Dcn. Mike Chmielewski assisting. Fr. Joe spoke of Pope Benedict's ideas that mercy and evangelization are very tied together and then he connected that to diaconal service exhibited by Ken. Bishop Sklba offered the Final Commendation and the appreciation of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

Please keep Deacon Ken and his family in your prayer. May he rest in peace!

Deacon Mike Chmielewski

▶ **ANSWERING THE CALL** *(continued from page 5)*

or even running water, BUT they are RICH because of their FAITH. They grow what they need, share everything extra, are joyous and joy-filled people. They are happy, colorful, and resourceful and work diligently to build their churches by hand using whatever tools and materials are available no matter how long it takes. They walk to church in the pitch dark, just to be found singing and praying as they await the priest's arrival for daily Mass at 6 a.m. Older women are out at the crack of dawn, sweeping the dirt grounds and pathways, and children study and grow. They find joy in competing against other schools. The Church is the center of everyone's life, and the future of the Church (our very Catholic future) was well reflected in the face of every child I met.

I didn't know what to expect. I wasn't sure what I would do or find once I got there. What I found when my trip was

completed was the faith of the child I was raised with as a boy. I left there full of hope and promise knowing God has my back forever and ALWAYS.

POST NOTE: In August 2017, St. Mary by the Lake held a silent-auction and donated the money to the second and poorest St. Paul's Parish I had visited. We raised \$5,623.50 USD, which I was able to put in Fr. Colman's hands for the building projects there. With the Nigerian conversion, it came to OVER \$1 million! We received a heartfelt acknowledgement from the Bishop (Most Rev. Paulinus Chukwuemeke Ezeokafor), thanking us for our generous contribution to the Nigerian faithful. Fr. Colman wrote to tell me the people of St. Mary by the Lake are remembered in every Mass they say!

Dcn. Bob Starr

(Part one of this story was published in the May 2018 Deacon Talk)

Prayer Requests

Deacon Tony Martino '84
and wife Carole Ann
Florencia Blas, wife of late Dcn.
Francisco '98

Deacon Roberto Fuentes '02
and wife Lorenz

Deacon Jay Wittak '05
and wife Susan

Deacon Dick Govek '92
and wife Dorothy

Deacon Baleriano Gonzalez '84

Deacon Ron Schneider '96

Donna Hying, widow of
Dcn. Joseph '84

Ginny Schimmels, widow of
Dcn. Tom '84

Judy Francois, wife of Dcn. Jim '83

Deacon Leon Zalewski '83
and wife Joan

Deacon Troy Major '02

Deacon Larry Normann '84

Cathy LaFond, wife of Dcn. Larry '83

Lisa and Henry Schumacher

Phyllis Heideman, wife of Dcn.
Willis '02

Dcn. Don Kabara '77
Betty Rooney and Dcn. Mike
Rooney '88

Dcn. Ted Gurzynski '84
Emily Collins, daughter of
Dcn. Dean '84

RECENTLY DECEASED AND THEIR FAMILIES:

Phillip and Nadine Burmeister
(brother of Dcn. Dan '02), 5/25/18

Deacon Kenneth J. Miller '77,
6/24/18

Deacon Candidate Paul Schumacher
(class of 2018), 7/8/18

Deacon Francisco Blas '98, 7/22/18

Judy Kabara, 8/9/18, wife of
Dcn. Don '77

Lawrence Hansen, 8/13/18,
father of Dcn. Keith '09

INDIGENT BURIALS:

Caroline Marie Schmidt, 6/20/18

Steven Scherrei, 7/18/18

John Hauboldt, 7/18/18

Suzanne Martin Smith, 7/18/18



**ARCHDIOCESE
of MILWAUKEE**

**Published and Edited by
Deacon Services**

P.O. Box 070912 | 3501 South Lake Drive
Milwaukee, WI 53207-0912
414-769-3409

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Many Hands. One Vision.



Catholic Stewardship Appeal

Archdiocese of Milwaukee

*This ministry is funded by the
Catholic Stewardship Appeal.*