

THE *Deacon Servant*

OFFICES OF DEACON SERVICES | DIACONATE FORMATION | ARCHDIOCESE of MILWAUKEE



IN THIS ISSUE:

- Deacon Services 1
- Correction 1
- Processing Applications ... 2
- We are Easter People..... 2
- Deacon Senate..... 3
- Thank You 3
- Formation of Deacon 4
- Know Our Deacon 5
- Personnel Board 5
- Prayer Requests 6
- Dates to Remember 6

DEACON SERVICES REPORT



Deacon Mike Chmielewski

I am writing this article on April 1 – April Fools’ Day! It is likely still the early stages of this pandemic and I assume that there will be very few April Fools’ jokes today. As a world community, we are all experiencing the fears and anxieties, the limitations and sacrifices, great sadness and simple joys, all in varying degrees.

Webster defines a fool as: “a person lacking in judgment or prudence.” My invitation to you all, as disciples of Jesus and part of His diaconal community, is to reflect on how this crisis will change us and our world. Will we – all of our we’s – still be fools in June, September, November, and beyond?

You will not read this until after Holy Week. However, think about how different this Holy Week was compared to nearly every Holy Week you have ever celebrated. The liturgical and prayer experiences of Holy Week are meant to inspire, fill us with awe, call us into a deeper relationship with God, and unite us as a world faith community. For the deacon, it is likely the most important and special time of the year. It can also be the busiest time of the year as we assist in planning liturgies, preparing homilies, and choreographing the prayer experiences. The busyness can often distract from our personal prayer experience.

This year, Holy Week will be different. As we enter the liturgical experience from afar or via video, the distractions and the busyness of the prayer have been minimized. The question is then, how have we maximized our personal encounter with God? Have we taken full advantage of His Holy Word in the Holy Week stories of Sacred Scripture? The Holy Week invitations of our God are always the same,

“Come journey with me and experience my saving presence, then and now!”

What happens as our world heals and a new normal emerges? How soon will lessons learned be forgotten? Will our rediscovered long-distance relationships through phone, video, or email continue to grow or die a forgotten skill?

Pope Francis led a powerful and haunting prayer on March 27 from St. Peter’s Square. In almost total isolation, he reflected on Mark’s Gospel story of Jesus calming the sea. He revered the presence of our Savior in the Blessed Sacrament. He blessed our world, in an empty, rainy St. Peter’s Square, with the Body and Blood of our Savior.

I leave you with some quotes from the Pope’s reflection that day: “It is not a time of judgment, but of our judgment: a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not. ... Prayer and quiet service: these are our victorious weapons. ... He is risen and is living by our side.”

Peace and Blessings to all,

Deacon Mike Chmielewski

CORRECTION FROM THE PREVIOUS ISSUE

In the Winter 2020 edition of “The Deacon Servant” I wrote a summary of the Deacon Listening Session held in September. Dcn. Larry Normann was our main presenter and I relayed incorrect information in my summary. I stated that Larry was abused at St. Lawrence Seminary which was INCORRECT. Larry was a survivor of abuse that occurred after Larry had entered a Capuchin Formation House and did NOT occur at St. Lawrence Seminary. I apologize for the incorrect information.

Deacon Mike Chmielewski

PROCESSING APPLICATIONS AND FORMING CANDIDATES DURING A PANDEMIC



*Deacon Dale
Nees*

Who would have thought that our initial efforts with distance learning would be so helpful in navigating a pandemic? The simple answer is God. Of course, there is a lot more detail involved, but Diaconate Formation has the active support of Leadership and Information Services to continue operating under the current requirements of being “safer at home” until we can resume gathering together in person as a formational

community.

We will resume formation as scheduled on Saturday, May 2, 2020, with all participating remotely. We will have our own ZOOM account and will be using two hosts, one per class. The version we will use will support the number of participants we have in formation currently. Naturally, there will be a learning curve involved in fully leveraging all the features that the application has available to us. The Formation Leadership Team knows that other formation programs throughout the United States have already used significantly more distance learning very effectively. We know this approach works well for classes on Tuesday nights. Saturdays will provide a bit more of a challenge, but I am encouraged that both classes (2020 and 2022) have already started to dialogue and do Evening Prayer together using the ZOOM technology on their own initiative. Now that is being proactive agents of their own formation!

Our Office has many other activities that happen during this period in our formational cycle. For instance, we have to summarize Trimester II updates and evaluations for the Committee on Admissions and Scrutiny (C.O.A.S.) which when completed we plan to handle electronically.

Beyond that, we are receiving volumes of information from our twenty-one applicants. Charmaine and Manuel check all this information in and place it in binders. Manuel and I compile it for our reports for C.O.A.S. and recommendation to the Archbishop. We have to determine the managing of Deacon-couple interviews with applicants. For now, we have extended our timeframes through mid-May and might need to default to interviewing applicants using technology versus face to face. I have used ZOOM to successfully provide Discernment Sessions, perform a wife interview and administer the Deacon Perceiver. All of which I felt went very well.

New to this cycle, Psychological Testing has become part of the admission to the Aspirant Path. Our Psychological Consultant, having processed the test results, then conducts interviews with the applicants. We have delayed those interviews for the time being. We are exploring whether these interviews are manageable using other means of communication.

We are still wondering how we may need to handle the activities of C.O.A.S... We have planned to meet and do an overview of all applicants on June 2, 2020. The Committee has set aside June 9 and June 16, 2020, for interviewing potential aspirants/wives and subsequently offering their recommendations for admission. In addition, we plan to meet on August 4, 2020, regarding Ordination for the Class of 2020 and Institution to Acolyte for the Classes of 2022.

So, we are literally “zooming” around to accomplish all this, working remotely as much as possible. So please keep the Formation Leadership Team (Manuel, Charmaine, and myself), faculty, candidates/families, and applicants/families in your prayers.

Deacon Dale T. Nees

WE ARE AN EASTER PEOPLE

A few short weeks ago, what seems like ages ago, as we received ashes on our foreheads, little did we know that we would be celebrating Holy Week and Easter liturgies as we did: through videos from empty churches. On Ash Wednesday, “coronavirus” was barely in our vocabulary. It was a threat that seemed to be far away, happening “over there.” We touched people, traced crosses on our foreheads, and breathed the exhortation, “Turn away from sin and believe in the Gospel.” The name “COVID-19” had barely made it out of the medical and scientific community and into our everyday lives. Now, we proclaim the

good news from a distance...at least six feet apart.

We adapted. We turned to technology, relying on lots of smart and talented people and quickly coming up to speed on the capabilities of our smart phones and tablets. We got out of our comfort zones and learned new ways to deliver – and to receive – the Gospel message of hope and conversion. We do not know the end of the COVID-19 story, but we know the end of Paschal Mystery: Resurrection, Resucitó! The Good News! The love of God through Jesus Christ conquers sin and death! “We are an Easter people, and Alleluia is

our song.” These words, usually attributed to St. Augustine and brought forth anew into the modern world by Pope St. John Paul II, are particularly appropriate for our times. People are hurting, scared, confused, worried...dying. We need to hear and to share this message of hope through our words and our actions.

John Paul proclaimed these words while visiting Australia in November 1986. Here is the heart of that message:

We do not pretend that life is all

► See **EASTER PEOPLE**
(continued on page 3)

► **EASTER PEOPLE** *(continued from page 2)*

beauty. We are aware of darkness and sin, of poverty and pain. But we know Jesus has conquered sin and passed through his own pain to the glory of the Resurrection. And we live in the light of his Paschal Mystery – the mystery of his Death and Resurrection.

“We are an Easter People and Alleluia is our song!” We are not looking for a shallow joy but rather a joy that comes from faith that grows through unselfish love that respects the “fundamental duty of love of neighbor, without which it would be unbecoming to speak of Joy.” We realize that joy is demanding; it demands unselfishness; it demands a readiness to say with Mary: “Be it done unto me according to thy word.”

My friends, as deacons we are keenly aware of the darkness of sin, poverty, pain, and suffering. Through our ministry and through

our own life experiences we know that life is not all beauty. But, our faith assures us that Jesus, through the love of God the Father, took that pain and suffering with him to the cross, and he overcame that sin and death. That is the Paschal Mystery of our lives. We are an Easter people.

Our people and our families need us now more than ever. Many know the darkness and have trouble seeing the light. Many pray for security, protection, and health – for God to take away the danger – but they still get hurt and suffer. We can spread the light like we would have done at the Easter Vigil: the Good News of joy that comes, as John Paul said, “from faith that grows through unselfish love.” Faith through love in action: sounds like diakonia to me!

Be careful, be wise, be safe, and take care of yourselves and your families. May the love of Christ the Servant be with us all. Amen. Alleluia.

Deacon Scott Wiese '12

DEACON SENATE

The Deacon Senate met via phone conference on March 18 with the entire Council in attendance: Dcns. Wiese, Bowen, Nees, Campbell, Petro, Copson, Starke, Paczkowski, Schneider, Chmielewski. President Wiese began the meeting with prayer.

Scott Campbell followed with a finance report. The current balance of the Council account is \$6,386.53 and we appear to be in very good financial shape. The two major upcoming events will be postponed and there are no major expenditures expected for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Dale Nees offered a detailed Formation Report in writing before the meeting and he focused on several significant points. In very exciting news, his team is now processing 21 applicants for the new Aspirancy class set to begin in September. The team is also making significant adjustments for the current classes in the wake of the health crisis but the team is very hopeful of meeting all the formation requirements. The planned April trip to LaSagrada for the first year candidates has been postponed to at least Fall. Ordination for the Class of 2020 set for September 12 at the Cathedral.

Other discussion items included:

The effort to purchase a scooter for the LaSagrada permanent deacon is moving very well. To date, individual deacons have sent in checks totaling \$1120 with some promised pledges still outstanding. St. Mary Parish in Kenosha, where Dcn. Wilson Shierk began this project, has collected over \$800. The Council agreed to add \$200 from our account. Monies will be deposited into the Council account and then a check sent to the Arch World Mission Office. It will then be wired to Fr. Mike Wolfe, Pastor at LaSagrada, for him to purchase the scooter and use excess funds for future diaconal ministry and formation purposes.

Discussion and eventual postponement of two upcoming deacon

events. The Women of the Diaconate Retreat (4/2-4/6) and Deacon Day 2020 (4/25) have been postponed. Planning groups will look at the feasibility of rescheduling the events in the Fall.

Jim Starke was the lone nominee for President-Elect of the Senate and was unanimously approved. His term will begin on July 1, 2020, when the usual officer rotation takes place. Jim will replace Dale Nees whose 6-year term ends.

There was a very hopeful discussion about the new Arch policy of having weddings outside of a church. Five deacons on the Senate reported receiving approval from the Chancery for wedding venues outside of a church including wedding “barns” and the Grand Geneva Resort.

The meeting ended with a prayer for our world, Church, Archdiocese, and the deacon family. The next Senate meeting is set for May 20, 2020.

Deacon Mike Chmielewski

THANK YOU

Dcn. Wilson began an effort to purchase a scooter for Dcn. Domingo so he can more effectively serve his community. St. Mary's in Kenosha has raised over \$800 and the Milwaukee Deacon community has sent over \$1700 to Fr. Mike Wolfe, Pastor La Sagrada Familia Parish for purchase of the scooter.

Thank you all to those who contributed!



Deacon Wilson Shierk, St. Mary's Kenosha, and Deacon Domingo Perdomo Castro, La Sagrada Familia Parish, Dominican Republic.

FORMATION OF DEACON: A WHOLE CHURCH COMMITMENT



**Manuel
Maldonado-
Villalobos**

As we continue the application process for the new class of Aspirants of 2020, I would like to reflect on who is responsible for the discernment and formation of future deacons. In the “*Basic Norms for the Formation*

of Permanent Deacons” from the Congregation for Catholic Education, it states: “*The formation of deacons, like that of other ministers and all the baptized, is a duty which involves the whole Church.*” It is our responsibility as a Church community to collaborate in the formation of future deacons, through encouragement, support and prayers.

This commitment starts with the diocesan bishop, our Archbishop, who is responsible for the discernment and formation of future deacons in all their path of formation: Aspirancy, Candidacy and Post-ordination. As the “*National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States*” (NDFMLPD) #266 states:

“In the formation of deacons, “the first sign and instrument of the Spirit of Christ is the proper Bishop. . . . He is the one ultimately responsible for the discernment and formation” of aspirants and candidates, as well as the pastoral care of deacons. He discharges this responsibility personally, as well as through “suitable associates” who assist him—the director of deacon formation and the director of deacon personnel. Both directors are accountable directly to the bishop or, in his absence, to a priest whom the bishop has

appointed as his delegate: e.g., vicar general, vicar for clergy. While the bishop may exercise his responsibility through his formation associates, nevertheless “he will commit himself, as far as is possible, to knowing personally those who are preparing for the diaconate.”

In our Archdiocese of Milwaukee, we have a formation structure that goes accordingly with our “National Directory”:

- Archbishop Jerome T. Listecki, Primary Formator
- Very Reverend Jerry Herda, Vicar for Clergy
- Dcn. Dale Nees, Director of Diaconate Formation
- Mr. Manuel Maldonado, Associate Director Diaconate Formation
- Dcn. Michael Chmielewski, Associate Director of Deacon Services
- Pastors/Parish Directors and Parish Community

Let’s talk about the responsibilities of the pastors/parish directors and community. From the beginning, these “Formation Communities” are fundamental in the discernment, formation and life of the deacon. The pastor/parish director is responsible to endorse the man that is discerning the vocation to the permanent diaconate from his/her parish community. They are to discern the involvement and service a man offers in their church and their community. After endorsement, the pastor/parish director commits to accompany the man and his family during the formation process. He/she supports the man and his family in prayer, presence and ministerial and financial support; supervises his parish pastoral placement experiences;

provides assessments/evaluations of his development to help the Formation Office to discern his readiness to move forward to the different paths of formation. Without this support from the pastor/parish director, our Archbishop cannot fulfill his role as the primary formator in the selection of future deacons.

The Parish Community is another important part of this formation journey. The church community helps the man and his family in his vocational discernment. The community supports the man and his family through prayer and with opportunities where the man can increase his knowledge of ministry in different areas, such as liturgy, evangelization, charity and justice. A church community that understands their role in the formation of a deacon will be open to aiding the man in his path to ordination and after ordination.

The pastor/parish director and the church community are the ones that respond to the call of the Apostles, where they remind us: “*Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom.*” (Acts 6:3) For these important roles in the formation of future deacons, our Office for Diaconate Formation wants to say THANK YOU.

Thank you pastors/parish directors for your support and commitment to our Archbishop and the formation staff. Thank you to the church community for their prayers and opportunity in ministries for our men in formation. It is with you that the formation of deacons is complete because this formation is a commitment from the whole Church.

Manuel Maldonado-Villalobos

KNOW OUR DEACON

In late November 2019, I had the good fortune of visiting with one of our retired deacons. Dcn. Jim Peterson was ordained in 1990 and was assigned to serve at St. Sebastian Parish in Milwaukee. Jim and his wife Donna live in a home where they raised their three children, just a few blocks from St. Sebs.

Jim was active in all the usual liturgical roles at St. Sebs. Outside of the parish walls, his ministry included visits to hospitals, nursing homes, and the homebound. Jim also had a very unique ministry. For more than 20 years he would schedule his work vacation time around Milwaukee's Great Circus Parade. He, and often his entire family, would spend that time at the lakefront home of the Circus Parade. There he and his family volunteered in many roles and Jim was active in ministry and prayer



Deacon Jim Peterson

services for the people in this transient community. Jim had a special affinity for the clowns! Jim and his family were also regular visitors and volunteers at the Circus World Museum in Baraboo.

Jim's great love of the circus is very

evident immediately upon entering his home. Pictures, posters, books, photos, train sets, and animal figures fill the home. There are also many photographs of Jim and his family in their many volunteer roles with the circus.

Jim retired fully from covenanted diaconal service in May of 2015. He does not drive and has limited mobility due to various foot, leg, and other medical issues. He does, however, walk up to St. Sebs on good days...and every Sunday is a good day...and offers to help if needed. I delivered the new Baptism Rite Book to him in March as he plans to preside at Baptism services when called upon by the pastor.

To Dcn. Jim Peterson '90, the original circus minister, "Thank you for all you have done for God's people!"

Deacon Mike Chmielewski

DEACON PERSONNEL BOARD

The Personnel Board met on Saturday, March 7 at the MMCP. Deacons in attendance: Gulig, Schneider, Stanula, Nosacek, Matthias (guest), Chmielewski. Excused: Campbell. Also in attendance Fr. Jerry Herda. The meeting opened with prayer and reflection led by Dcn. Stanula. The meeting minutes from October 12, 2019, were reviewed and approved.

The first order of business was a lengthy discussion with Dcn. Jim Matthias about his potential change of assignment in September. This discussion was not precipitated by any conflict. Instead, this is a proactive attempt by the Personnel Board to plan and enter into discussion with deacons about assignment changes. Specifically, in Dcn. Jim's case, there is an anticipated 2020 ordination of a new deacon for St. Dominic Parish, Brookfield where Jim now serves along with another active deacon and a retired deacon. Without a move, that would leave St. Dominic's with 3 full-time deacons and several neighboring parishes with no deacons. Also of note, Dcn. Jim and his family do not reside in the neighborhood of St. Dominic which could lead to broader assignment possibilities.

The discussion was very positive and the Board suggested 3 parishes for Dcn. Jim to investigate as a possible new assignment. Both Fr. Herda and Dcn. Chmielewski are very

willing to discuss a possible diaconate assignment for Dcn. Jim with a pastor. This discussion will be considered a template for future placement/assignment discussions. There are currently multiple men in formation from parishes with current deacons in active ministry and there continue to be parishes with no diaconal presence that would embrace the presence of a Deacon.

Additional topics of discussion at the meeting:

Deacon specific issues including 18 covenant renewals, 1 retirement, 9 special circumstances, and 6 overdue covenants.

Review a listing of parishes with multiple deacons in service and current men in formation.

Discussion about parish planning now going on at the Deanery level and how deacons should be a part of the process.

Dcn. Gulig informed the Board of the regional SVDP conference scheduled for June 11-13 in Waukesha

We needed to postpone our planned discussion of Chapter one of the National Directory because of time issues. The meeting closed with prayer and the next meeting was set for May 9, 2020, 9-11 a.m. at MMCP.

Deacon Mike Chmielewski

Prayer Requests

Dcn. Chuck Schneider (`14)
 Dcn. John Fritsch (`14)
 Dcn. Leon Zalewski (`83) and wife Joan
 Phyllis Heideman, wife of Dcn. Willis (`02)
 Dcn. Richard Hiller (`75)
 Jeri Petro, wife of Dcn. Greg (`12)
 Dcn. Dave Pollak (`96)
 Dcn. Dan Zozakiewicz (`94)
 Dcn. Dick Govek (`92) and wife Dorothy
 Dcn. Don Lydolph (`81) and wife Jane
 Dcn. Sy Regan (`75)
 Zachary Savin, grandson of Dcn. Wenzler (`94)
 Dcn. Gary Nosacek (`14) and family
 Michael Francois, son of Dcn. Jim/ Judy
 Russ Zimprich, son of Dcn. David (`84)

Dcn. Pat LaPointe (`14) and family Sarah, granddaughter of Eva Libecky (widow of Dcn. John (`78)

RECENTLY DECEASED AND THEIR FAMILIES

Barbara Iwan, wife of Dcn. Hank (`82), Jan. 31, 2020
 Geraldine Hayes, mother of Dcn. Steve (`04), Feb. 1, 2020
 Ernesto Benavente, father of Dcn. Jorge (`98), Mar. 6, 2020
 Catherine LaPointe, wife of Dcn. Pat (`14), Mar. 29, 2020

DIGNITY BURIALS

Czeslaw Klocek, Feb. 5, 2020
 Joshua Bishop, Feb. 6, 2020
 Daniel Musgrave, Feb. 6, 2020
 Edward Chaloupek, Feb. 28, 2020
 Edward Szymanski, Feb. 28, 2020
 Alan Maxey, Feb. 28, 2020
 Billy Ray Johnson, Mar. 27, 2020



DATES TO REMEMBER

April 25, 2020 – POSTPONED

Presentation on Servant Leadership with Tom Thibodeau
 St. Eugene, Fox Point

June 6, 2020

Post Ordination Formation, Session 2, Class of 2018
 MMCPCC

September 5, 2020

Ordination Rehearsal Luncheon
 Cathedral Atrium at 11:30 a.m.

September 12, 2020

Ordination of Class of 2020
 Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist at 10 a.m.

October 18, 2020

Memorial Mass, Bishop Schuerman presiding
 Good Shepherd, Menomonee Falls at 2 p.m.

November 6-8, 2020

Deacon Retreat with Bishop Haines
 Redemptorist Retreat Center

November 14, 2020

Women's Day of Reflection with Sr. Virginia Stone
 St. Joseph Center

December 5, 2020

Synod Anniversary Celebration
 MMCPCC



ARCHDIOCESE
of **MILWAUKEE**

Published by Deacon Services and Diaconate Formation
 P.O. Box 070912 | 3501 South Lake Drive Milwaukee, WI 53207-0912

Deacon Michael J. Chmielewski, Director Deacon Services, (414) 769-3409
 Deacon Dale Nees, Director Diaconate Formation, (414) 758-2212
 Manuel Maldonado-Villalobos, Associate Director, (414) 758-2207

