

THE *Deacon Servant*

OFFICES OF DEACON SERVICES | DIACONATE FORMATION | ARCHDIOCESE of MILWAUKEE



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DIRECTOR’S REPORT



Deacon Mike Chmielewski

Deacon James Starke '16. Dcn. Jim serves at St. Boniface Parish in Germantown. Dcn. Jim is working out his transition plans with his current employer and is also preparing for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land Jan. 19-29 with Bishop Hying. He will begin his duties as the Director of Deacon

Services on Feb. 1, 2023. Dcn. Jim and I will work together Feb. 1-3 in an effort to make for a smooth transition. Dcn. Jim will fly “solo” beginning Feb. 6, 2023. I know you all will prayerfully support Dcn. Jim, and his wife Amy, as he takes on this special ministry.

As for me, I thank you all for your prayer, support, encouragement, questions, challenges and, above all, your friendship. Thank you for so often being my eyes and ears in the community. The last seven years have been a very special experience. I have been privileged to be a part of so many of your lives in so many special moments. I have been a part of the blessing and grace of

Greetings Deacon Family! In the October issue of this newsletter, I announced my retirement plans with a hopeful target date of early 2023. Plans have now been solidified as Archbishop Listecki has appointed my successor,



the ordination of 33 men and their spouses. I have buried 72 deacons and/or spouses, often entering their earthly journey at the most intimate of times. I have met with, spoken to or exchanged messages with nearly every one of the 220-plus members of our family. For those with whom I have not connected, I apologize.

One of my most prized experiences took place on Dec. 26, 2018. That year marked the 50th anniversary of the renewal of the order of the Permanent Diaconate by Vatican II. On that day, we gathered as the diaconal community of Milwaukee to celebrate that promulgation, as

well as the anniversary of Milwaukee’s first ordination class of Permanent Deacons on Dec. 26, 1975. Six of the eight living members of the Class of '75, four wives and a widow joined in the celebration. Archbishop Listecki presided over the anniversary Mass with Bishops Sklba, Haines and Schuerman in concelebration. It was a very real call to ponder and reflect on the gift of the Diaconate under the guidance of our bishops.

Again, I thank you all. Know that you will remain in my heart and in my daily prayer. Praise to our God!

Deacon Michael Chmielewski '09

THE SPIRIT OF ACCOMPANIMENT & THE MYSTERY OF VOCATION



Deacon Dale Nees

“The history ... of every Christian vocation, is the history of an *inexpressible dialogue between God and human beings, between the love of*

God who calls and the freedom of individuals who respond lovingly to him!”¹

We are entering a critical period of recruitment between now and Thanksgiving. To support the entire archdiocese, we are hoping to establish one information session in every deanery and two sets of discernment sessions in every region. Presently, Deacon Council District Representatives are working diligently with their constituents to schedule out actual dates, times and locations for these sessions. The sooner these details settle into place, the more effective we will be as an order in promoting vocations to the diaconate and inviting others to collaborate with us in this effort.

Based on our prior experience, it generally takes between 50 and 70

RECRUITMENT TIMELINE:

Intakes

Information and Discernment Sessions

Canonical Interviews

Endorsement by Pastors/Parish Directors

Applications

Selection

Aspirant classes begin for new five-year program

Ongoing

February through November 2023

December 2023

January 2024

Mid-January through May 2024

June 2024

September 2024

contacts to reach a class size of 20 or so aspirants. To date, we have recorded a dozen new contacts. If statistics hold true, we would like to see another 40 to 60 contacts in the near future. For me, this highlights the importance of all of us to recognize, identify and invite men who demonstrate the traits and dispositions that point toward a diaconal vocation to discern it within a spirit of accompaniment.

The National Directory indicates, “The first stirrings of a vocation to the diaconate are often explored at a personal level and usually begin with information about the diaconate and formation.” (No. 177) As deacons and

deacon wives, we need to be prepared to both listen and respond to this need for information. Our role as Diaconate Formation is always to be available as an archdiocesan resource. We are prepared to respond readily to any inquiry and do intakes year-round. That said, it will take all of us to promote this incredible vocation, which is a constitutive part of the Church and her mission.

Deacon Dale Nees '09

¹Congregation for Catholic Education. *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons (Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Diaconorum Permanentium)*, Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1998.

NEW DIRECTOR

It was the last morning of our ordination retreat. I could not sleep. The words of our formation director, “Remember, all roads lead to the cross,” were taking on a new reality. Sitting on a park bench, staring into the eastern sky, my mind raced with the coming challenges and opportunities. As the first golden rays of sunlight broke through the opening in the clouds, I felt the words of Christ, “and behold, I will be with you always.” Since that morning, I have clung to that promise, as I am sure all of us have, over and over, again.

Today, Amy and I find ourselves a couple weeks away from taking a new road in our lives. The opportunity to serve and support the Church and the deacon community is truly a grace. Again, I find my mind is racing over the

coming challenges and opportunities. I am humbled by the confidence Archbishop ListECKI, Fr. Reesman and Fr. Herda have placed in me. I am grateful for the foundation Dcn. Mike Chmielewski, Dcn. Dave Zimprich and the former directors of Deacon Services laid down for the deacon community. I ask for your prayers and support as we continue to cling to Christ’s promise.

To Dcn. Mike, on behalf of all of us who were blessed to have you as our director, thank you for all of your dedication and hard work over the last seven years. May God bless you and Mary as you take this new road in life.

Peace of Christ.

Dcn. Jim Starke '16

“BRING IN THE HEART”



*Dcn. Manuel
Maldonado-
Villalobos*

People who know me well will say that I am an “internet surfer.” I like to search the internet, social media and more. I like to know more and experience more. One of the things that always gets my attention are the “media memes” about the battle between the brain and the heart. You can just write in the search bar “brain vs. heart” and look for images, and you

will see tons of graphics showing a continuous battle between the brain and the heart. When we talk about formation, this image of this battle/separation seems to come to life. There is a struggle between what is intellectual and what human development as a “whole person” is.

The National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States, second edition, states that: “One who will serve as a deacon requires a formation that promotes the development of the whole person. Therefore, the four dimensions in formation should be so interrelated as to achieve a continual integration of their objectives in the life of each participant and in his exercise of ministry.” (Cfr. #113)

It is very important for everyone involved in this formation (men, spouses, family, faculty, parish, etc.) to understand that we cannot just think or focus only in the “brain,” the intellectual dimension of the formation process. The interrelationship between the four dimensions is key for a successful human, pastoral, spiritual and yes, intellectual growth. The challenges happen when individuals think or see formation just with the “brain,” just as an intellectual process. It is true that the heart just pumps blood, and the brain controls the body and emotions, but we always relate these emotions or feelings to our hearts, and that is when this “battle” happens. To be open, to have a successful formation experience that transforms the individual into an image of Christ the servant, it is important to understand that it is not just

your brain!

The formation program includes courses, workshops, field experiences and very important moments of worship and prayers. If the individuals see these experiences as just classes to learn more, they are missing the whole picture of formation and will struggle with the process. It is important that not everything is just “classes to learn more.” Some courses, workshops and experiences need to be taken from the “heart” and not the brain. For example, classes based around theology, history and sacred scriptures are intellectual courses because they are based on doctrine and concrete information. They help us to know more. Courses or workshops based around spirituality, liturgy or prayer have an intellectual part in them, but the goal is for the individuals to grow in their spiritual life. If the individuals see these just as “information to learn,” they will struggle in how to apply the experiences to their lives. Field experiences and human development workshops help the individuals to develop self-knowledge. If the individuals look at these experiences just as information, it will be hard to discover their gifts, strengths and/or weaknesses to be transformed into a servant leader.

Formation is not about having the best academic grades. It is also about if the person has the qualities, skills and vocation to be servants to the people of God. Grades help the faculty and formation staff to know where the person is or needs support. Yes, if the individual has poor grades, we need to discern what the reason is and how we can help the person to improve or to discern his future, but more important is the spiritual, human, and pastoral growth and development that shows what is needed to be an image of Christ the Servant.

Four dimensions interrelate to form the whole person. It is not just your brain! It is not merely looking at formation as an intellectual process of learning more. When it is intellectual, we think intellectual; when it is spiritual, human or pastoral, we need to put aside the “intellectual” mind and bring in the heart.

DISCERNING THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES FOR THE WIVES' PROGRAM



Maritza Espino

On Jan. 4, 2023, I celebrated my two-year anniversary as the associate director of pastoral formation for the Office of Diaconate Formation. It's a privilege to be part of a formation team that is passionate about the formation of the gentlemen who are discerning their call to become deacons with full support of their wives.

As I have mentioned before, the support of the wife to her husband is imperative. Therefore, the wives come for formation as well. In their first trimester as aspirant wives, they are required to come six Saturdays for an all-day formation. Some wives come on Tuesday nights, too (this is optional). After the first trimester, they transition to come two Saturdays per trimester, usually the first and the last Saturday of the trimester. For some of the couples, this can be challenging, especially if they have babies and young children. In these cases, they might have to depend on the support of family and friends while they accompany their husbands for an all-day formation. There is no doubt that discernment in their call to the wife of a deacon requires a lot of sacrifice.

On our behalf as formators, we recognize the sacrifices and challenges that couples face as they discern their call. As a result, we have implemented surveys that help us to know their needs and fulfil them by offering formation workshops focused on their needs. Survey Monkey is an online tool that we use to collect their feedback. We discuss as a team the feedback and how we are going to implement their responses and/or suggestions in

the near future. Additionally, wives are now invited to be present during the aspirant and/or candidate feedback sessions after each trimester. These 30-minute feedback sessions with Dcn. Dale Nees, director; Dcn. Manuel; the couple; and myself allow us to build trust, get to know the men and women in a different setting outside of a regular classroom and build relationships of accompaniment that are essential as they continue their formation. We have wives that require translation from English to Vietnamese and Spanish, and we have been translating and sending them the material ahead of time (one week before the Wives' Day) so they come prepared to participate and engage with the rest of their group. Based on their feedback, this has been a great help for them. Finally, during our fall trimester, we created a nursing room for mothers who have this need. Last year, we welcomed a young mother who brings her newborn baby on Saturdays and uses this lovely space to feed and comfort her baby as needed during the day. We are off to a great start to implement a family formation program that promotes and supports not only the aspirants and candidates but their families as well.

From the standpoint of pastoral formation, we recognize the sacrifices these ladies make and adapt to their family needs by discerning ways in which we can help them be successful with their formation. Of course, we are always obedient to the principles, norms and pastoral implications of the National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States. (Second Edition, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

Maritza Espino

KNOW OUR DEACON

Dcn. Joe Wenzler was ordained a Permanent Deacon in 1994 and was assigned to his home parish, St. Cecelia, Thiensville. In 2006, St. Cecelia and St. James, Mequon, merged, becoming Lumen Christi Parish, where Dcn. Joe continues to serve now as a Senior Deacon. Also in 2006, Dcn. Joe and his wife Ann began spending our wonderful Wisconsin winters living in Arizona. Since 2006, Dcn. Joe has served as a "Deacon Extern" at St. Clare of Assisi Parish in Surprise, Arizona (Diocese of Phoenix).



Deacon Joe Wenzler

Professionally, Dcn. Joe is a C.P.A. whose career has entailed work in finance and leadership. He has assisted multiple parishes on their finance councils. He has also participated in advisory councils for St. Francis Seminary, Medical College of Wisconsin and Marquette University. In 2002, he was awarded the Vatican II Award for Service to Administration.

Dcn. Joe continues to be active as a Senior Deacon at Lumen Christi (and in Arizona). In addition to the usual liturgical and sacramental services, he offers services at local nursing homes, brings communion to the sick and homebound, and volunteers at the St. Hyacinth Food Pantry.

Thank you, Dcn. Joe, for all you do for God's people.

WOMEN'S DAY OF REFLECTION

On Saturday, Dec. 3, women of the diaconate gathered at the Mary Mother of the Church Pastoral Center for a morning of reflection. Twenty-seven women, representing ordination classes from 1977 to 2022, gathered in the spirit of Advent prayer.

Mary Lestina, pastoral associate at St. Dominic Parish, Brookfield, lead the reflection entitled, "You are my Beloved: Journey with Christ, Mary, and ourselves in the Advent Mystery." Mary used personal stories, Scripture references and stories about Mary our Mother to invite the ladies to ponder and reflect on being God's "Beloved." The morning included communal prayer, small group table discussion, large group sharing and some quiet reflection time, all directed at experiencing the Advent mystery.

The morning concluded with a catered sandwich and/or salad lunch from Skyline Catering. The women all seemed to truly enjoy the overall opportunity to pray, reflect and reconnect. They are planning on continued gatherings in 2023.

Dcn. Mike Chmielewski



REST IN PEACE

✠ **Dcn. Gerald Buyck** died Dec. 31, 2022. Born March 7, 1945, in Moline, Illinois, and growing up in the Quad Cities, he graduated from United Township High School, East Moline, in 1963. He began his professional career with John Deere in various capacities in 1967, which led him and his family from East Moline to Dubuque, Iowa; Hampton, Illinois; Stockton, California; and to Horicon, Wisconsin. Upon retirement from John Deere in Horicon, he returned to East Moline.

Dcn. Gerald married his high school sweetheart, Jo Ann, on April 30, 1966. Together they had two children: Lisa Buyck-Breselow and Mark Buyck. He is also survived by three grandchildren and two great

grandchildren. His beloved Jo Ann died Oct. 31, 2019.

Dcn. Gerald was ordained a Permanent Deacon on June 1, 1996, by Bishop Richard Sklba. He was assigned to his home parish, St. Malachy in Horicon. In 1997, Dcn. Gerald was offered a retirement package from John Deere that he could not refuse. He then returned to his roots, moving to East Moline. He continued to serve as deacon first at St. Mary's, East Moline, and then at Christ King, Moline. He lived by the words of St. Francis: "Preach the Gospel at all times; when necessary use words."

Funeral services were held Jan. 7, 2023, at Christ King Church in Moline.

May he rest in peace.

DEACON SENATE/SEPTEMBER

The Senate met Sept. 21. It was the first time the Senate met in person since the onset of COVID-19. While we have all become well adapted to the use of technology over the last couple of years, there is no substitute for meeting in person, sharing a laugh and being able to pray together in person. There were many items discussed. Below are some of the more important points of note:

- The Senate wanted to extend its appreciation to the family of Dcn. Roberto Salazar, who passed away earlier this month. The family asked that all donations from the funeral be offered to the Office of Diaconate Formation. They wanted to express how important the diaconal vocation was to Dcn. Roberto and his family.
- The Ministers of Care are looking for new members to help with their ministry of supporting deacon widows and assisting with the annual Memorial Mass. Ideally, they would like to see a husband-and-wife couple from each district take part. If you are interested or have any questions, Dcn. Mike Chmielewski can put you in touch with current members.
- We are all required to sign an acknowledgement that we have read the updated Code of Ethical Standards. If you haven't already done so, please inquire with your parish. You can also download the form off the archmil.org website or through CMG Connect.
- Dcn. Scott Wiese is organizing a mission trip to the Dominican Republic in the fall of 2023. More details to follow.
- If anyone is interested in or is currently participating in jail ministry, please reach out to Dcn. Jim Matthias, director of Respect Life Ministry. Dcn. Jim is working to organize the archdiocese's efforts to reach out to incarcerated community.
- The traveling Rosary for Life efforts are taking root. A prayer service is being held at various parishes on the first Saturday of each month. It is currently booked out until July of 2023. See Dcn. Jim Matthias, director of Respect Life Ministry, for available weekends.
- Dcn. Jim also spoke of the increased emphasis on the "Walking with Moms in Need" program, which has taken on significant importance in light of the Dobb's decision.
- Dcn. Kurt Peot, continuing formation coordinator, spoke of his experience taking over the office from Dcn. Al Lazaga, along with other personnel changes: "It has been a steep learning curve." Dcn. Kurt reminded the senate of the funds available for deacon special studies. Grants up to \$4,000 are available for specific applications. This may be in addition to each deacon's continuing formation fund. See Dcn. Kurt if you have any questions.

Please remember that events such as the Memorial Mass, Deacon Day and the annual deacon retreat are excellent opportunities to reconnect with the deacon community. If we are to fulfill our diaconal call, we need to remember that we do not walk this path alone. We need each other.

God Bless,

Dcn. Jim Starke

DEACON SENATE/NOVEMBER

The Deacon Senate met Wednesday, Nov. 16 via Zoom. Below are some of the main points:

- From a financial standpoint, the budget remains strong. Income and costs are tracking as forecasted.
- The ODF is continuing to look at new ways to identify and meet the demands of the aspirants, candidates and pastors. The surveys being used are an effective tool. Refer to Dcn. Dale Nees' report for more details.
- The deacon retreat was a great success. Thank you to Fr. Robert Kroll, Dcn. Dennis Petrie, Dcn. Paul Klingseisen and all who helped. The attendance numbers were considered low and attributed to the aging demographics of the community and opportunities for alternative retreats. Nonetheless, Fr. Kroll's Ignatian-based

► See DEACON SENATE (continued on page 7)

DEACON MEMORIAL MASS

Our annual Deacon Memorial Mass, where we honor and remember our deceased deacons and spouses, took place Sunday, October 23, 2022. The gathering was planned by the southside district and took place at St. Roman Parish on 17th Street and Bolivar Avenue in Milwaukee.

Archbishop ListECKI was our presider and homilist, with St. Roman Pastor, Fr. Gideon Buya, concelebrating. Dcn. Jorge Zuniga '07 (assigned to St. Roman's) and Dcn. Ted Faust '16 assisted at the altar. Archbishop ListECKI reflected on the blessings of the diaconate and the important role the deacon community plays in the life of our Church. He reminded us that the diaconate is still in "infancy" stages, being only 50 years since the renewal of diaconal ministry by Vatican II. In addition, he reflected on the good service of those whom we remembered at the Mass, noting that we are all an important instrument of light to the world.

After Mass the group (80-90) gathered for a lasagna dinner prepared and served by "That's Amore" restaurant. The dinner had classmates and widows gathering to renew relationships.

Thank you to the St. Roman's community for hosting this important event and in particular Fr. Gideon and Dcn. Zuniga. Thank you to Archbishop ListECKI for leading us in prayer. And thank you to all in the southside deacon district for their work to make the day successful.

I want to send out a special note of appreciation to the Ministers of Care Committee, some of whom began



this special event many years ago. The 2022 gathering is this group's final planning event as they are handing off this special ministry to new leadership. Thank you to Dcn. Tom and Jean Surges '79, Mary Ann Ebel '96, Meriel Christensen, Kathy Bitante, Jan Telderer, Dcn. Bill Banach '83, Dcn. Ralph Kornburger and Jane '79, and Dcn. Jim Chrisien '98. (I am sure I have missed others who have contributed to this event.)

However, that means we are in need of a team of people to take over this ministry. I am thinking that a deacon couple or a widow from each district could be that committee. Please let me (or my successor) know if you are interested in this ministry.

Memorial Mass 2023 is scheduled for October 22, 2023, at St. Katharine Drexel Parish, Beaver Dam. Bishop James Schuerman will be our presider.

Dcn. Mike Chmielewski

► DEACON SENATE (continued from page 6)

presentation was well received. Satisfaction results from the post-retreat survey were highest in previous years. The committee is already working on the details for next year's retreat. More information to come.

- The Senate formally approved and now welcomes Dcn. Ted Faust as President Elect. Dcn. Faust will begin his term in July. Thank you, Ted, for your willingness to serve.
- Dcn. Jim Matthias thanked the Senate for their support for the Respect Life Ministry. The monthly Rosary for Life prayer services are scheduled through August. There are additional dates for prayer services available. Please reach

out to Dcn. Jim if your parish is interested in hosting.

- Thank you for filling out the Code of Ethics acknowledgement and submitting your continuing annual formation report. Please note that submission of these documents is required by the archdiocese.
- The 2023 Ordo is available. Due to a glitch, nine deacons who died in 2021 were not included. It was a clerical error. Dcn. Mike Chmielewski will send out an addendum to deacons to be inserted into the Ordo.
- The Cathedral is looking for deacons to serve on the rotating list for the Sunday morning 9:30 a.m. Mass. Please contact the parish office if interested.

The next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 18 via Zoom.

Prayer Requests

Dcn. Troy Major '02

Dcn. John D'Alessio '98
and wife Antoinette

Dcn. Tom Filipiak '94

Dcn. Al Foeckler '07

Dcn. Roberto Fuentes '02

Dcn. Bill Banach '83

Dcn. Larry Normann '84

Dcn. John Ebel '96

Dcn. Keith Marx '07

Dcn. Ray Waitrovich '98

Dcn. Ron Schneider '96

Dcn. Chester Moczydlowski '79

Dcn. John Burns '88

Carole Martino, widow of
Dcn. Tony '84

Elena Salazar, widow of
Dcn. Roberto '98

Dcn. Richard Piontek '86

Dcn. Chuck Hankins '02

Sue McCauley, daughter of
widow Jan Telderer

Dcn. Al Lazaga '92

Jean Surges, wife of Dcn. Tom '79

RECENTLY DECEASED AND THEIR FAMILIES

Lorenza Fuentes, wife of
Dcn. Roberto '02, Oct. 21, 2022

Margarita Cruz, Mother-in-Law
of Dcn. Cornejo '98, Oct. 21, 2022

Dcn. David Backes '05, Dec. 23, 2022

Dcn. Gerald Buyck '96, Dec. 31, 2022



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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