

Office for Diaconate Formation  
Archdiocese of Milwaukee  
Archbishop Cousins Catholic Center



# The Servant

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John Paul II recalled "Deacons, both married and celibate, to serve God's People by their witness to the gospel value of sacrificial love, a quality of life too easily dismissed in today's society." For those whom the Lord calls and whose lives' give such a witness, the ODF is the place to continue your journey.

(NDPD, 30)

## From Deacon John's Desk

Dear Friends of the Diaconate,

As I sit down to share my thoughts with you, fall is definitively in the air. The day is cool, and the trees have begun to show those beautiful hints of yellow and orange color as the summer green struggles to hold on. Summer here in the ODF was very busy. The selection process for the new class of deacon-candidates was completed and Archbishop Listecky selected five of the aspirants to move forward into candidacy. Auxiliary Bishop Donald Hying presided over the *Rite of Admission to Candidacy for Holy Orders* on September 7. (see back page).

Our third year candidates successfully completed their extensive pastoral field placement experiences in their home parishes over the summer and are now, as fall approaches, involved in liturgical *practicum*; learning how to preach a Sunday homily and beginning to learn about the pastoral care and dynamics of the family. They are very busy to say the least!

In actuality, the change of the seasons and the busyness of the formation process is truly a foretaste of the hectic pace they can anticipate as they eventually enter into ministry once they leave the safety of the formation environment, are ordained deacons and become the servant leaders who evangelize and teach the Word of God, provide witness and guidance in the area of Charity with Justice, all the while calling each of us to sanctity as we live out the Eucharist (the source and summit of Christian life) in service to our brothers and sisters—the Body of Christ.

Please keep all of these men and their families in your prayers. They are with joyful hearts offering themselves to the Church's mission to "go make disciples of all the nations..." in a permanent, non-compensated role, to be for all of us the on-going presence of Christ the Servant!



Deacon John A. Ebel, Director



### OUR LOCATION:

Archbishop Cousins Catholic Center  
3501 South Lake Drive  
PO Box 070912  
Milwaukee, WI 53207-0912

Information: 414-758-2202  
Fax: 414-758-2233

### Our staff:

Deacon. John A. Ebel, Director  
414-758-2212; [ebeli@archmil.org](mailto:ebeli@archmil.org)  
Manuel Maldonado (Español), Associate Director  
414-758-2207; [maldonadom@archmil.org](mailto:maldonadom@archmil.org)  
Charmaine Pfeifer, Administrative Assistant  
414-758-2202; [pfeiferc@archmil.org](mailto:pfeiferc@archmil.org)

## Acts 6 and the Diaconate By: Bishop Richard Sklba

### ***Acts 6 and the Diaconate: Some further thoughts***

For centuries, perhaps even millennia, Catholic tradition has linked the origin of the diaconal ministry to the story of the Seven in Acts 6:1-6. Almost invariably this story of the dispute over care for Hellenistic widows and the early response of the Twelve's leadership in Jerusalem is chosen as one of the Scripture lessons for ordinations to the diaconate. Giving alms for the poor and hungry was a major duty in Jewish piety. The same corporal work of mercy reflects duties embraced by the ministry exercised by the deacon Lawrence in early Christian Rome and associated with our deacons today.

**“...Select seven men of solid reputation...”**

Because of the pressing duties of the Twelve in the preaching of the Resurrection (v.2), the proposal was made to select seven men of solid reputation to take over the distribution of food to the Greek speaking Christian widows in Jerusalem. The names proposed all had a distinct Greek character. They formed a mini-senate or council.

Immediately thereafter, Stephen is described as entering in debate with Jewish leaders over matters of the law, and becomes the first Christian martyr (Acts 6:8-7:60). Philip (the jogger) is then described as he travels to spread the Gospel to Samaria (Acts 8:4-8, 26-40). This added evangelization to their works of charity.

Thus care for the needy members of the early Christian community in Jerusalem and the ministry of the Word became associated with the Seven, and it was easily concluded that the diaconal ministry as we have come to know it had its origins in the establishment of the Seven in leadership. That same template was renewed when Pope Paul VI responded to a request of the bishops at the Second Vatican Council and formally restored diaconal ministry in 1972.

From the standpoint of biblical symbolism, however, the number seven had long been associated with leadership in a community. It was Peter and six others who went fishing and witnessed the Lord's request that Peter feed the sheep (John 21:2ff), and seven disciples who entered the home of Cornelius at Joppa for the first gentile baptism (Acts 11:12).

Consequently, a case can be made for the early Church recognizing the distinctive spirituality of Greek-speaking Jewish Christians and granting them their own servant leadership. The imposition of hands on the Seven (Acts 6:6) signaled their association with the mission of the Twelve, not the transmission of independent authority. The story as recounted in Acts might more directly initiate what later came to be different rites and cultural traditions in Christianity ... perhaps similar to today's Western and Byzantine traditions of Christianity. The New Testament story describes diaconal ministry without necessarily being the origin of the diaconate as we experience it today.

Deacons are an integral part of Catholic Christian ministry. Every parish should have the blessing of their symbolic call to associate care for the poor, proclamation of the Word and Eucharistic prayer. They call the entire Catholic community to such service today and lead the way as servants.

- Bishop Richard J. Sklba



## “Hechos 6 y el Diaconado” Por: Obispo Richard Sklba

### ***Hechos 6 y el diaconado : Algunas reflexiones adicionales***

Durante siglos, tal vez milenios, la Tradición Católica ha vinculado el origen del ministerio diaconal a la historia de los siete en Hechos 6:1-6 . Casi invariablemente, esta historia de la disputa sobre el cuidado de las viudas Helenistas y la respuesta temprana de liderazgo en Jerusalén de los Doce es elegida como una de las lecciones bíblicas para las ordenaciones al diaconado . Dar limosna a los pobres y hambrientos era un deber importante de la piedad judía . La misma obra de misericordia corporal refleja deberes asumidos por el ministerio ejercido por el diácono Lorenzo, en la antigua Roma cristiana y asociado con nuestros diáconos hoy.

Debido a las tareas urgentes de los Doce en la predicación de la resurrección (v. 2), se hizo la propuesta para seleccionar a siete hombres de buena reputación para hacerse cargo de la distribución de alimentos a las viudas cristianas de habla griega en Jerusalén. Todos los nombres propuestos tenían un carácter griego distinto. Formaron un mini- senado o consejo .

Inmediatamente después, se describe como Stephen entrar en un debate con los líderes judíos sobre los asuntos de la ley, y se convierte en el primer mártir cristiano (Hechos 6:8-7:60 ) . Philip (el corredor) es descrito a continuación, ya que viaja a difundir el Evangelio a Samaria (Hechos 8:4-8 , 26-40 ) . Esto sumado a la evangelización de sus obras de caridad.

Por lo tanto cuidar a los miembros más necesitados de la comunidad cristiana primitiva en Jerusalén y el ministerio de la Palabra fue asociado con el Siete , y fue fácilmente la conclusión de que el ministerio diaconal como lo hemos llegado a conocer tenía su origen en el establecimiento de los Siete en el liderazgo. Esa misma plantilla se renovó cuando el Papa Pablo VI respondió a una petición de los obispos en el Concilio Vaticano II y formalmente restauró el ministerio diaconal en 1972.

Desde el punto de vista del simbolismo bíblico, sin embargo, el número siete ha sido, durante mucho tiempo, asociado con el liderazgo en la comunidad. Fue Pedro y otros seis que fueron a pescar y fueron testigo de la petición del Señor a Pedro de alimentar a las ovejas (Juan 21:02 ss), y siete discípulos entraron en la casa de Cornelio en Joppe para el primer bautismo de gentiles (Hechos 11:12 ) .



Por lo tanto, un caso puede ser hecho para la Iglesia primitiva reconociendo la espiritualidad distintiva de los cristianos judíos de habla griega y concederles su liderazgo de servicio. La imposición de las manos sobre los Siete ( Hechos 6:06 ) señaló su asociación con la misión de los Doce, no la transmisión de la autoridad independiente. La historia que relata en Hechos podría iniciar más directamente lo que más tarde llegó a ser diferentes ritos y tradiciones culturales del cristianismo... quizá similares a las tradiciones occidentales y bizantinas de la actualidad del cristianismo. La historia del Nuevo Testamento describe el ministerio diaconal, sin ser necesariamente el origen del diaconado como lo experimentamos hoy.

Los diáconos son una parte integral del ministerio cristiano Católico . Cada parroquia debe tener la bendición de su llamada simbólica a asociarse con el cuidado de los pobres, la proclamación de la Palabra y la Oración Eucarística. Ellos llaman a toda la Comunidad Católica a tal servicio hoy y liderar el camino en el servicio.

- Obispo Richard J. Sklba

## News and more

### Admission to Candidacy

On September 7th, 2013 five men were instituted as Deacon Candidates for the class of 2016. These men, chosen by Archbishop Jerome ListECKi, were admitted into Candidacy by Bishop Donald Hying during a special Mass followed by a reception with some candidates family members and other candidates to the diaconate.

A deacon-candidate is a man who, aspiring to ordination for the diaconate, has publically manifested, in the Rite of Admission to Candidacy, his will to offer himself to God and the Church to exercise a sacred order. "Enrollment among the candidates for the diaconate does not constitute any right necessarily to receive diaconal ordination. It is the first official recognition of the positive signs of the vocation to the diaconate,

which must be confirmed in the subsequent years of formation"<sup>1</sup>

The candidate path in diaconal formation is the occasion for continued discernment of the diaconal vocation and immediate preparation for ordination. Throughout this path in formation, the candidate himself assumes the primary responsibility for his discernment and development.

"Self-formation does not imply isolation ... or independence from formators, but responsibility and dynamism in responding with generosity to God's call, valuing to the highest the people and tools which Providence puts at one's disposition. Self-formation has its roots in a firm determination to grow in life according to the Spirit and in conformity with the vocation received..." (204).

### Admisión a la Candidatura

El 7 de septiembre de 2013, cinco hombres fueron instituidos como candidatos al diaconado para la clase del 2016. Estos hombres, elegidos por el Arzobispo Jerome ListECKi, fueron admitidos en la candidatura por el Obispo Donald Hying durante la celebración de una Misa especial, seguido de una recepción con los familiar y otros candidatos al diaconado.

Un candidato-diacono es un hombre que aspira a la ordenación al diaconado, ha manifestado públicamente, en el Rito de Admisión a la Candidatura su voluntad de ofrecerse a Dios ya la Iglesia para ejercer el orden sagrado. "Admisión de los candidatos al diaconado no necesariamente constituye ningún derecho a recibir la ordenación diaconal. Es el primer reconocimiento oficial de los signos positivos de la vocación al diaconado, que debe ser confirmada en los años posteriores de la formación "<sup>1</sup>

El camino del candidato en la formación diaconal es la ocasión de continuar el discernimiento de la vocación diaconal y la preparación inmediata para la ordenación. A lo largo de este camino en la formación, el propio candidato asume la responsabilidad principal de su discernimiento y el desarrollo.

"La autoformación no implica aislamiento ... o independencia de formadores, pero la responsabilidad y dinamismo en responder con generosidad a la llamada de Dios, valorando al máximo las personas y herramientas que la Providencia pone a la disposición de uno. La autoformación tiene sus raíces en una firme voluntad de crecer en la vida según el Espíritu y en conformidad con la vocación recibida ... "(204).



Our web address is:  
<http://www.archmil.org/offices/Diaconate.htm>

