

THE Deacon Servant

OFFICES OF DEACON SERVICES | DIACONATE FORMATION | ARCHDIOCESE of MILWAUKEE



ARCHDIOCESE of MILWAUKEE
DIACONATE
Where love becomes service.

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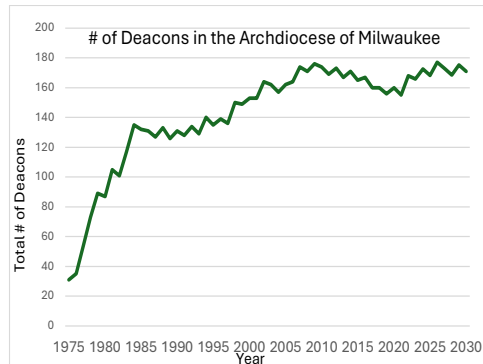
DIRECTOR'S REPORT



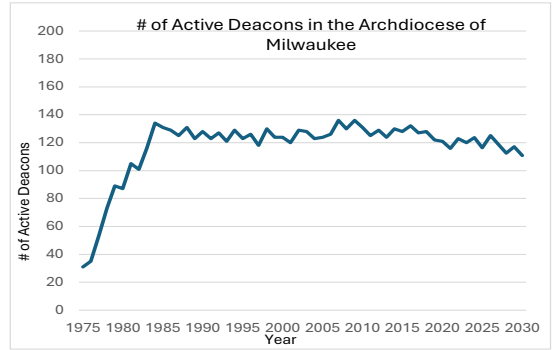
Deacon Jim Starke

Many have asked questions about the number of deacons in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Are we growing in numbers? Shrinking? Or are we staying about the same? The answer to all three of these

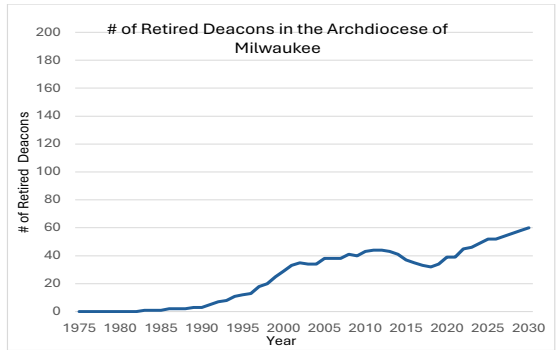
questions is: yes. It depends on how we look at the numbers. As shown below, the number of deacons in our community continues to grow since the initial ordination class in 1975. However, the number began to stabilize over the last 20 years. Currently, there are about 175 deacons who are either active or retired. Based on the projected ordination class sizes, we expect this number to remain through 2030.



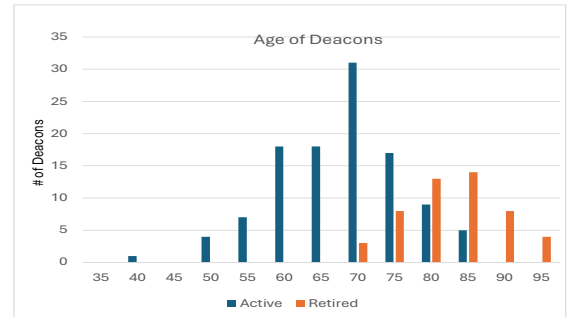
On the other hand, as shown in the chart in the next column, the number of active deacons in the archdiocese is on a slight decline. After reaching a peak of 136 in 2007, the number will drop to 124 after 2024's ordination. That number is projected to drop to 111 by 2030.



The decrease in the number of active deacons is due to the increase in retirements. As shown in the chart below, the community of retired deacons is increasing at a higher rate than the number of new deacons being ordained to replace them.



The increase in retirement is due primarily to an aging diaconate community. The average age of an active deacon is 67 years-old. Over the last 15 years, the average age of retirement is 77.



SAYING GOODBYE TO TRIMESTERS



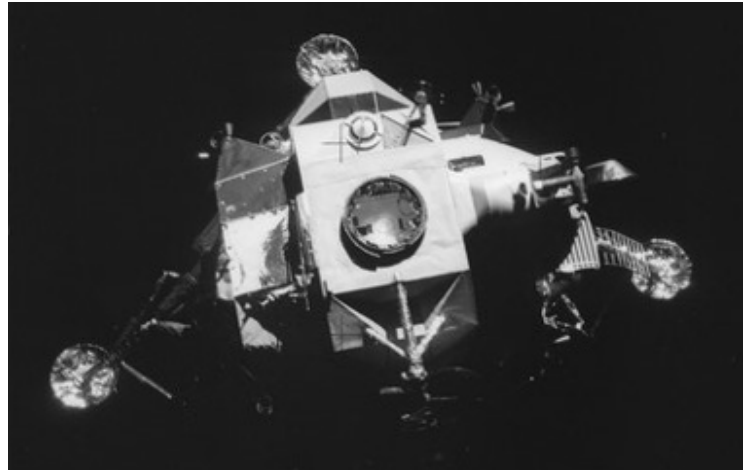
Deacon Dale Nees

“This Second Edition of the National Directory went through extensive review and some meaningful revisions... The date of official promulgation by the President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is June 9, 2022, the Memorial of St. Ephrem, Deacon, Confessor, and Doctor of the Church.”¹

One of my favorite movies is “Apollo 13.” As summarized by IMDB: “After faultlessly performing numerous crucial operations that it was never designed for, thereby saving the astronauts’ lives, the crew must jettison their Lunar Excursion Module, ‘Aquarius.’ Fred Haise...watches through the window as it drifts off into space and says, ‘She sure was a good ship.’ Then Jack Swigert adds, ‘Farewell, Aquarius, and we thank you.’”²

That pretty much sums up how I feel about saying goodbye to trimesters. They were a necessary and crucial part of implementing the First Edition of the National Directory promulgated on December 26, 2004, the Feast of St. Stephen, Deacon and Martyr, with full implementation by August 10, 2005, the Feast of St. Lawrence of Rome, Deacon and Martyr. 50 men have been ordained utilizing that design and curriculum to date. We anticipate adding 11 more to the list on September 7, 2024, 10:00 a.m. at St. Monica in Whitefish Bay.

The following Ordination Class of 2026 will be the last four-year formation program using a slightly modified curriculum as they transition back to a two-semester format to complete their initial formation. They could only do that because they were selected prior to the promulgation date of the second edition of the National Directory. It will be the aspirant class of 2024 that will launch the new five-year curriculum made up of two semesters. We believe this design will be more conducive to family life, especially for those who have younger family members. We also feel a two-year aspirancy will be better for us as formators to fully appreciate the suitability and readiness for a man to become a deacon candidate. As the curriculum was being revised, our vision for aspirancy was to create more opportunities for theological reflection, discernment and preparation in all four dimensions: human, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral, all before petitioning for candidacy. Unpacking the aspirant path of formation over two years rather than one allows us to optimally accompany their discernment.



The implementation of this second edition of the National Directory was made possible because of the prior successful mission of implementing the first edition. I gratefully acknowledge all the work of my predecessor, Deacon John Ebel, who, along with his team at that time, led that foundational mission from which we could build upon.

Deacon Dale Nees

¹United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States of America: Second Edition (Washington, DC: USCCB), Foreword.

² <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0112384/characters/nm0000200>

► DIRECTOR’S REPORT - Continued from Page 1.

Another contributing factor, as shown in the table below, is that nearly twice as many deacons were ordained in the first 25 years of the diaconate, compared to the last 25 years. In addition, those original deacons were also, on average, five years younger at the time of their ordination.

Ordination Years	Age at Time of Ordination	# of Deacons Ordained
1975 - 1999	49.0	208
2000 - 2024	54.5	110

This data demonstrates the importance that we continue to promote the diaconate to those in our parishes who may have a vocational call. We should be sure to include the younger men in our parishes knowing that the Office of Diaconate Formation and Deacon Services are making the needed accommodations to address the unique challenges faced by candidates who may have young families.

ARTICLES IN SPANISH ARE COMING BACK!



**Dcn. Manuel
Maldonado-
Villalobos**

As we continue to focus on accompanying our Spanish speaking brothers and sisters in the pursuit of this vocation of service, we have decided to bring back the Spanish section of the Deacon Servant newsletter! Translating a number of articles in Spanish allows us to continue to reach out to the Hispanic population.

“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.”¹ Including not only in the formation path, but also in our ministries after ordination.

As we recognize the need to reach out to our growing Hispanic population, we are called to continue our promotion and catechesis about the diaconate. It is also in the spirit of accompaniment that we see the need to offer some of our information in Spanish to help the deacons and, in a special way, their wives to be up to date in matters

of the diaconate community. It is a way we can strengthen our deacon community and offer opportunities for understanding. We are not saying that our brothers do not speak English; as ordained ministers for the Church in the USA, we need to have the basics of the English language to be completely bilingual.

We also understand that, in matters of evangelization, we always say that faith is learned and better understood in the person’s native language. Even Jesús understood this when He sent the Holy Spirit in Pentecost, and the people started to ask, “Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language?” (Acts 2:8).

As we have the resources and personnel to offer this opportunity, we are happy to serve and reach out to more people from the community to our deacons and families. As one community, we continue to strive to recognize the cultural diversity and the needs of our brothers and sisters; this is a little sign of building a strong community.

Dcn. Manuel Maldonado

¹The National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States of America, Second Edition, 2021, USCCB, n.155

DEACON SENATE

The Deacon Council met May 15. The meeting was held via Zoom. Below are the important points of note from the meeting:

- Scott Campbell presented the 2023/2024 financial report. The current balance is \$13,706 with outstanding deductions of \$5,000 for the Archbishop Mercy Fund and approximately \$700 in memorials. The fiscal year will end on June 30.
- Dale Nees reported that we currently have 11 candidates scheduled for ordination in September. There are 12 candidates in the Class of 2026. The anticipated incoming Class of 2029 is 11. The class schedule will change to the semester model in September.
- The Senate was well pleased with Deacon Day 2024. Many thanks to the deacons of Districts 14, 15 and 16. Attendance was down slightly from 2023. There were

fewer retirees this year. We need to look for creative ways in the future to make Deacon Day more accessible to the retired community.

- Fr. Silas Henderson will be the retreat leader for the Deacon Retreat, which is scheduled for the weekend of November 7-10.
- Dcn. Dennis Petrie spoke about the “Bridge to Recovery” highlighted in the Deacon Magazine. He is looking to expand the program in Wisconsin. Please reach out to Dennis if interested in participating in organizing this ministry.
- Please welcome Dcn. Jim Hall who recently moved from Rockford, Illinois, to the Sheboygan area. He is recently assigned to serve the Sheboygan South Side Parishes.

The next meeting is scheduled for September 18, 2024. The plan is to meet in person.

WIVES' FORMATION CURRICULUM



Maritza Espino

One of my favorite areas of responsibility is to plan and execute the curriculum for the Wives' Program in our Diaconate Formation. Yes, the wives do have a curriculum that we implement and tailor to their needs. Right now, we are following a transitional model for the class of 2026 due to the transition of moving from trimesters to traditional

semesters in fall 2024. For the Wives' Program, this is an opportunity to create new workshops with content that is suggested from the National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States of America, Second Edition, 2021.

The following Vatican Documents will be implemented as suggested from the National Directory mentioned above: Introduction to A Family Perspective in Church and Society, Apostolic Exhortation of the Family, (*Familiaris Consortio*) and The Joy of Love (*Amoris Laetitia*).

These documents focus on the importance of family and the impact it provides to society at large, based on Catholic values and teachings. Therefore, it is imperative that we provide dignified formation that will lead to transformation. For the wives, this will affect their families as they continue to support the vocation of their husbands.

While the National Directory does not mention specifically the Wives' Curriculum, it makes clear the importance of her well-informed consent and support to the vocation that her husband is expressing. With this in mind, we strive to provide formation that will include four dimensions: intellectual, human, pastoral and spiritual.



Picture from left to right: Awilda Aranda, Pastoral Associate at St. John Paul II Parish, Sharon Giersch, Vicki Kalnins, Gail Dompke, Duyen Tran, Missy Murray, Diane Ryan, Maritza Espino, Martha Contreras, and Kim Schraufnagel.

It is a curriculum much like the one for aspirants and candidates, with the exception that there are not classes. Instead, the wives' formation is structured in a workshop format. In the five-year program, the wives attend three to four Saturdays each semester, including a day of reflection. A Wives' Day is an all-day commitment filled with opportunities to pray, worship, work on self-care, build relationships and friendships among themselves. Through my accompaniment in the last three years, I have seen them minister to each other and build strong bonds, which I am privileged to experience.

On my end, the wives minister to me too. Formation is mutuality in ministry, and for that I am grateful. We are blessed to have faculty from different parishes of the archdiocese, Sacred Heart School of Theology, Marquette University, parish deacons, non-parish deacons, priests and pastoral staff at the Pastoral Center who have the expertise to teach the different workshops and collaborate with our Diaconate Formation Program.

Maritza Espino

REST IN PEACE

† **Dcn. Ron Schneider**, age 87, of Port Washington, Wisconsin, passed away Sunday, May 12. He and his wife Erla were living in West Bend at the time of his death. Ron was born December 17, 1937. Ron served in the United States Army, including four years in the Military Police Corps. After owning and operating a small gasoline service station, Ron joined Air Canada Airlines and was employed for 30 years. It led Ron and his wife Erla to Washington D.C. where he retired in 1991 as Air Canada's National Sales and Marketing Director. Upon retirement, Ron served as a Chaplain Intern at Sibley Memorial Hospital while completing his Clinical Pastoral Education Program.

Dcn. Ron was ordained a Permanent Deacon on September

7, 1996, in the Archdiocese of Washington D.C. He served 10 years at St. Matthias Parish in Lanham, Maryland. He also served as a hospice chaplain until 2006 when Ron and Erla moved to West Bend. He served 11 years at St. Frances Cabrini Parish in West Bend until his retirement from ministry in 2017. His ministries included serving as Director of Pastoral Care, offering communion calls, providing transportation and organizing First Friday Coffee and Cake socials. Dcn. Ron preached regularly, led the Rosary at daily Mass and served at weddings, funerals and Baptisms.

A Mass of Christian Burial was held May 21, at St. Frances Cabrini Catholic Church.

PLANTING TREES

By Dcn. Ed Sosa

I was just thinking as I was walking through my yard this morning...

I really love planting trees, shrubs and bushes too! At the same time, you can't get too fixated on the growth rate of the trees; otherwise it's sort of like wishing your life away, waiting for them to grow big.

It seems similar to living out our Baptism in service for the Lord.

We can't turn an oak or an elm sapling into a stately shade tree in just a few years. And we can't panic or get discouraged either when a young tree that was emerging with signs of new growth just a year ago, suddenly shows signs that it's not doing so well.

We also have to be careful not to overwater. It never hurts to consult an expert, like a local arborist, to address any developing issues.

We simply plant, water, fertilize and move on to weeding, mulching, mowing, and all the other needs in our landscape. And then we plant some more.

One day, we will get old, and we'll walk slowly to that old bench swing we built years ago. And then we can rest in the beautiful landscape that was once but a field of weeds and patchy grass.

We can marvel at what God has done in his time and in his

way, simply resting with a smile of awe and gratitude.

“What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. For we are coworkers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.” (1 Cor 3:5-9)

Lord, we thank you for a blessed school year. We ask that you would let the seeds we've planted for you take root and grow deeply for the advancement of your Kingdom. Amen.

WELCOME



*Dcn. Jim
Hall*

Please welcome Dcn. Jim Hall to the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Jim and Margeret recently moved from Rockford, Illinois, to the Sheboygan area. They have three adult sons. Jim works as an Information Systems/Consulting Executive. He is being assigned to Sheboygan South Catholic Parishes.

Prayer Requests

Dcn. Jim Chrisien '98

Dcn. Bill Clark '03

Dcn. Dean Collins '84

Dcn. Tom Filipiak '94

Michael Francois, son of

Dcn. Jim Francois '83

Jane Hanley, wife of

Dcn. Tom Hanley '77

Dcn. Troy Major '02

Anthony Kehrer, son of

Dcn. Dan Kehrer '92

Julie Rebholz, wife of

Dcn. Peter Rebholz '20

RECENTLY DECEASED AND THEIR FAMILIES

Jennie Dziennik, the widow of
Dcn. John Dziennik '94

Armando, the husband of
Maritza Espino (ODF)

Joan Leggett, the wife of
Dcn. Jim Leggett '83

Barbara Ann Nickel, the mother of
Dcn. Jim Nickel '05

Shirley Ann Nowicki, the widow of
Dcn. Edward '77

Dcn. Ron Schneider '96
(Washington, D.C.)



DATES TO REMEMBER

September 7, 2024, at 10 a.m.

Permanent Deacon Ordination,
St. Monica Catholic Church
5681 N. Santa Monica Blvd., Whitefish Bay

October 20, 2024, at 3 p.m.

Deacon Memorial Mass:
St. Mary Catholic Church
7307 40th Ave., Kenosha

November 8-10, 2023

Deacon Retreat, Redemptorist Retreat Center
1800 N. Timber Trail Ln., Oconomowoc

December 7, 2024 (TBD)

Wive's Morning of Reflection,
Mary Mother of the Church Pastoral Center
3501 S. Lake Dr., St. Francis

March 29, 2025, at 8 a.m.

Post Ordination Formation Class of 2024,
Mary Mother of the Church Pastoral Center
3501 S. Lake Dr., St. Francis

April 26, 2025 (TBD)

Transitional Deacon Ordination,
Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist
831 N. Van Buren St., Milwaukee

May 10, 2025, at 8 a.m.

Post Ordination Formation Class of 2022,
Mary Mother of the Church Pastoral Center
3501 S. Lake Dr., St. Francis



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Published by Deacon Services and Diaconate Formation

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Archdiocese of Milwaukee

*This ministry is funded by the
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