

THE Deacon Servant

OFFICES OF DEACON SERVICES | DIACONATE FORMATION | ARCHDIOCESE of MILWAUKEE



ARCHDIOCESE of MILWAUKEE
DIACONATE
Where love becomes service.

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Director’s Report 1
- Courageous Humility 2
- “Serve Everyone, When You Can, No Matter What” 3
- Wives’ Mentoring Program 4
- Deacon Day 2023 4
- Rest in Peace 5
- Anniversaries 5
- Deacon Senate 6
- NADD Conference 2023 6
- Prayer Requests 7
- Dates to Remember 7

DIRECTOR’S REPORT



Deacon Jim Starke

One of the last words of wisdom Dcn. Mike Chmielewski offered as he retired from the deacon director position and entered into his new journey in life was, “Just remember, it’s all about RELATIONSHIPS.” The focus of the director’s

position is the same as the focus of all of our missions, and that is to create, to foster, to mend and to encourage relationships. A deacon must be ever attentive to his relationship with God, with his family, his bishop, his pastor, his fellow deacons and the myriad of people he encounters in ministry. Most often, the times of our greatest blessings and our most difficult sorrows are rooted in our relationships with the people God places in our journey.

Never more was this made visible than the funeral for Dcn. Bill Banach, who passed away last month. The archbishop presided along with seven priests from the Basilica of St. Josaphat. There were approximately 30 deacon brothers attending along with several wives and widows. The congregation was filled with many family members, friends and the people Dcn. Bill touched throughout his long and blessed life. Beginning with his relationship with God, Dcn. Bill continually worked to create, to foster, to mend and to encourage relationship with all the people God placed along his journey.

Archbishop Jerome E. ListECKI stressed the importance of approaching our relationship with God and others with a sense of humility. Holding up Dcn. Bill as

an example, we are to always remember that we are servants of God, which means we are servants of others. We need to continue to work to place others first. We are called by Christ to love one another. It is often said, service is love made visible.

Archbishop ListECKI also stressed the importance of approaching our relationships with God and others with a sense of gratitude. We need to continually create, to foster and to encourage the realization that God has been and continues to be an integral presence in all of our lives. Through prayer, the sacraments and our relationships with others, our blessings are made visible.

At his ordination, the deacon places his hands into the bishop’s hands and makes his promise of respect and obedience. He enters into a direct relationship with his bishop under whose authority he is assigned to exercise his ministry. In many ways, the deacon models Christ, who was the servant of the Father. With the pastor being assigned as the deacon’s supervisor, the deacon is called to foster relationship with his pastor and the congregation.

At the same time that the deacon enters into relationship with the bishop, the bishop enters into a relationship with the deacon. It is the bishop’s responsibility to provide pastoral care. He appoints the deacon to specific assignments taking into consideration the deacon’s family and occupational responsibilities. He promotes ongoing formation, opportunities for spiritual growth, and fostering the deacon’s relationship within the deacon community. The bishop is ever mindful of the

COURAGEOUS HUMILITY



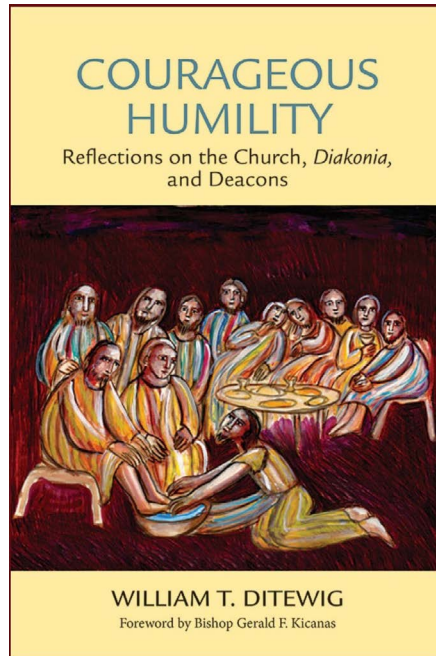
Deacon Dale Nees

“This way is first humility, second humility, third humility, and however often you should ask me, I would say the same, not because there are

no other precepts to be explained, but, if humility does not precede and accompany them and follow every good work we do, and if it is not set before us to look upon, and beside us to lean upon, and behind us to fence us in, pride will wrest from our hand any good deed we do while we are in the very act of taking pleasure in it.”¹

The above quote by St. Augustine struck a major chord with me as I was reading Deacon Ditewig’s recent book published in 2022. Certainly, I find this personally instructive in my own life, but even more so as I reflect upon my experience as Director of Diaconate Formation. Men, along with their families, who discern a diaconal vocation while keeping courageous humility at the forefront tend to remain open to whatever may happen with their discernment. The experience of what otherwise might feel like challenges that will most certainly emerge throughout formation are more apt to be received as opportunity.

Conversely, when cultivating humility seems latent, the barriers to advancement in formation are more prevalent.



I suppose that is why St. Teresa of Calcutta called humility the mother of all virtues. She saw it as essential and therefore nonnegotiable. Why? Because, she says: “If you are humble nothing will touch you, neither praise nor disgrace, because you know what you are.”² Without it one is unable to be open to ordination which through the power of the Holy Spirit brings us into the communion of an order ... “an act of, by, and for, the common good of the entire Church.”³

Yves Congar offered that it is humility which enables us “to survive the current crises and face the unknown future, [but] we must first have an attitude adjustment.”⁴ Such an adjustment simply requires two

things: faith and discernment. If you know of any man whose spirituality of service consists of “willingness on the inside and openness on the outside,” please encourage him to inquire and attend one of the upcoming diaconal discernment session series.⁵

Deacon Dale Nees

¹ St. Augustine, Epistola 118, ch. 3, par. 22

² <https://www.goodcatholic.com/mother-teresa-humility-list/>

³ William T. Ditewig, *Courageous Humility: Reflections on the Church, Diakonia, and deacons* (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2022), 95.

⁴ Yves Congar, *Power and poverty in the Church: The Renewal and Understanding of Service* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2016), 93.

⁵ William T. Ditewig, *Courageous Humility: Reflections on the Church, Diakonia, and deacons* (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2022), 97.

► DIRECTOR’S REPORT (continued from page 1)

relationship the deacon has with his pastor and parish. He is also attentive the deacon’s relationship with his wife and family. This pastoral concern is extended to the widows within the deacon community.

As members of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, our mission is:

“To proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ through his saving death and resurrection by calling, forming

and sending disciples to go and make new disciples.

As a people, we are called to encounter Jesus and grow as disciples through the sacramental life of the Church.”

We accomplish this mission by creating, fostering, mending and encouraging relationships with those we encounter on our journey. Most importantly, we do this with a sense of humility and gratitude.

May God bless Dcn. Bill and all those who serve God’s Church.

“SERVE EVERYONE, WHEN YOU CAN, NO MATTER WHAT.”



*Dcn. Manuel
Maldonado-
Villalobos*

Every day, when it is about serving others, I ask myself this question: “What comes first in services to others?” My answer every time is, “serve everyone, when you can, no matter what.” This past June 25, I was invited to represent the Catholic Church in a celebration of awareness and unity. The

World Refugee Day celebration sponsored by the Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee and with the presences of Catholic Charities and Mr. Rob Shelledy was inspiring. At the same time, it strengthened my commitment, in formation, to prepare deacons to be open to an interfaith and interreligious dialogue and service.

The National Directory for the Formation, Life and Ministry of the Permanent Deacons calls us to dialogue and service to other denominations and faith traditions. In number 159 it states:

“An ecumenical spirit should be integrated into all aspects of formation. Those who are or will be engaged in pastoral ministry must acquire ‘an authentically ecumenical disposition’ in their lives and ministry. The purpose of formation in ecumenism is to educate hearts and minds in the necessary human and religious dispositions that favor the search for Christian unity.”

As deacons we are called to serve everyone. As Catholics, we seek first to find elements of authentic truth and goodness in every Christian and non-Christian religion. In our Catholic Church, we understand that the term ‘Ecumenism’ refers to efforts of different denominations to develop relationships and understandings of their shared faith. In addition to that, as Catholics, “Interfaith Dialogue”

is the way of cooperation with people of non-Christian religions. Both are key in our openness as deacons to serve God’s people, as Jesus came to save everyone.

Dcn. Steve Kramer,¹ in an article for the magazine *The Deacon*, explains these relationships as a way for Christian unity and interfaith dialogue to emphasize “the universality of Christian unity among churches and [promote] harmony and cooperation ... understanding of the other.” With non-Christians, “interfaith dialogue promotes peace, mutual understanding and cooperation between Christians and non-Christian peoples.”

Our goal in formation is to clarify what ecumenism and interfaith dialogue means and undertake to be able to minister to every person and everywhere. Being able to understand this aspect of the Church does not make us unfaithful or deviate us from our Tradition and Doctrine, as some people may see it. On the contrary, understanding ecumenism and interfaith dialogue dissipates the fear of other faiths and ignorance of the beauty of what we have in common to promote service to others in charity, peace and unity. It is why “a genuine ecumenism should be thoroughly incorporated into all aspects of diaconal formation” pre- and post-ordination. (Cfr. 159 ND)

June 25 was one of those days where we shared one common goal and mission: service to immigrants and refugees, no matter religion, culture, color, language or races. Catholics, Christians, Jews, Muslims, and many more, gather with one purpose to create awareness of our brothers and sisters in need of service and welcoming. As deacons, we are called to “serve everyone, when we can, no matter what.”

Dcn. Manuel Maldonado-Villalobos

¹ <https://www.the-deacon.com/2023/02/15/the-deacons-connection-with-ecumenical-interfaith-ministry/>

WIVES' MENTORING PROGRAM

In our Mentoring Handbook, a mentor is simply defined by the Oxford American Dictionary as “a trusted adviser.” In our Diaconate Formation Program, the aspirants, candidates and wives partake in our mentor program as part of their formation. A “Mentor Wife” is the wife of an ordained deacon who has been trained and agreed to journey with the wives in a small group setting or individually. A mentor is trusted with the accompaniment of her mentee throughout her formation path.

Our mentorship program is intended to provide support, build relationships of trust, and share experiences and challenges in the ordinary and spiritual lives of the ladies. The mentors are invited to meet with their mentee once a month depending on their own needs (and if they have been assigned to one-on-one mentoring). We currently invite mentors once a trimester for small group mentoring; this has been a great experience for the 23 ladies in our program, and for their mentors.

The benefits of mentoring are:



- Building trusting relationships that may become a lifetime relationship.
- Being able to be heard by someone who has experienced what they are experiencing in formation.
- Being guided by someone who walked the same path offers guidance, perspective and understanding about their discernment in formation.
- Accompaniment throughout their journey by nurturing them with faith, prayer, and emotional and spiritual support.

- Encouragement to find a healthy balance between marriage, professional roles, diaconal formation and parish ministry.
- To continue discerning and developing their own identities as they continue to support their husbands in their vocations to become future deacons.

Mentors are members of the formation team and are invited “to collaborate with the director of formation on the programming of the different formational activities and in the preparation of the judgement of suitability. (The National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons, No. 293) Mentor-wives are assigned to aspirant and candidate wives by the director of Pastoral Formation. Along with the director of formation and the associate director, mentors function by discussing any concerns the mentee may have concerning their formation, and help us as formators attend to their needs and discern how we can continue to support them.

DEACON DAY 2023

St. Dominic Parish hosted this year’s Deacon Day on April 22. The deacons of Districts 4, 5 and 12 did a phenomenal job organizing the event. There were 127 attendees, which stretched the capacity of the hall. Most Rev. Auxiliary Bishop Richard Sklba shared his experience of being a pastor and bishop during the implementation of Vatican II reforms. Rev. Thomas Suriano spoke about the need to pray through the use of scripture. The humorous antidotes they shared were priceless. The wisdom they offered was invaluable. The deacon community was very grateful for their efforts.



Fr. Thomas Suriano offering methods for prayer through the use of scriptures.



Dcn. Jeff Kucharski assisting Bishop Sklba and Fr. Dennis Saran at Mass

◀ Bishop Sklba presenting his experience with the implementation of Vatican II reforms.

REST IN PEACE

† **Dcn. William A. (Bill) Banach**, age 93, passed away Wednesday, June 21. Dcn. Bill was born Dec. 8, 1929, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He graduated from St. Josaphat Grade School, Pulaski High School and Marquette University. In addition to serving in the military, and working as a draftsman at Allis Chalmers, Dcn. Bill spent most of his career as a civil engineering technician for the Bureau of Engineers, City of Milwaukee.

Dcn. Bill married the love of his life, Janet Jablonski, on December 27, 1951, at St. Anthony, Milwaukee. Dcn. Bill is preceded in death by Janet, his loving spouse of 51 years, and his sisters Joan Banach and Anita (Dcn. Robert) Czajka. He is survived by his son William (Marie) Banach, daughters Mary Banach and Deborah Frey, his sister Beverly Krass, and longtime friend and caretaker Jane Jonietz. Dcn. Bill had three grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Dcn. Bill was ordained a Permanent Deacon by Most Rev. Rembert G. Weakland, O.S.B., Archbishop of Milwaukee, at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist on January 22, 1983. He was originally assigned to St. Rafael the Archangel (Church of the Holy Spirit), Milwaukee. Among many ministries, Dcn. Bill administered baptisms, conducted wake services, and ministered to the sick and homebound, along with teaching baptismal catechesis and marriage instruction. In 1987, he received his preaching faculties. Dcn. Bill was also involved with the St. Vincent de Paul Society and SHARE. In 2007, Dcn. Bill 'returned home' when he was assigned to the Basilica of St. Josephat, Milwaukee. He continued his extensive list of ministries including his involvement with the Boy Scouts of America, the Polish Festival Liturgical Committee and serving on the Deacon Personnel Board. Dcn. Bill retired in 2016. At the age of 93, Dcn. Bill continued many of his ministries, including bringing the Eucharist to the homebound and working with Polish Fest.

Up until his unfortunate death, Dcn. Bill was a fixture in the deacon community. He regularly attended Deacon Day, Memorial Mass, and the annual deacon retreat. His 40 years of ministry serves as a model for deacons to emulate. He was truly a Servant of Christ and will be greatly missed.

Services were held Thursday, June 29, at the Basilica of St. Josaphat.

ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to the Class of 1983 who are celebrating their 40th Anniversary of Ordination:

James Leggett	Ralph Janasik
James Francois	Eugene Schopper

Congratulations to the Class of 1998 who are celebrating their 25th Anniversary of Ordination:

Jorge Benevente	Paul Huber
Andy Meuler	Jim Chrisien
Julio Lopez	Greg Price
Carlos Cornejo	Stan Lowe
Salvador Rozado	John D'Alessio
Rogelio Macias	Ray Waitrovich
Alvaro Dominquez	



Dcn. Julio Lopez pictured with Dcn. Starke



Deacons Stan Lowe, Ray Waitrovich, John D'Alessio and Andy Meuler

DEACON SENATE: JANUARY/MARCH 2023

Since the last publication of the Deacon Servant Newsletter, the council met May 17. The meeting was held in person at the MMCPC. Below are some of the more important points of note from the meeting:

- Treasurer Scott Campbell reported that the balance of the account dropped significantly mainly due to Deacon Day. However, the transfer of funds from the participating deacon's continuing education fund had not been completed. The anticipated council contribution to Deacon Day will be approximately \$1000.
- Dcn. Dale Nees continued to stress the need to promote the diaconate in the individual parishes for the class beginning in 2024. Information and discernment sessions are scheduled throughout the archdiocese. Information brochures were sent out to all the parishes. A new video is in the process of being produced. There are currently 11 candidates in the class of 2024 and 12 aspirants.
- The Formation/Family Committee continues to work to review the curriculum of both pre- and post-ordination formation to ensure that it adequately addresses the needs of the family.
- The council recognized the excellent job District's 4, 5 and

12 did in order to make Deacon Day a resounding success.

- Dcn. Jim Matthias talked about Job Core efforts. Job Core runs a free program to give people a vocation with free room and board. There is no spiritual component, and Dcn. Jim is investigating if deacons could help. Participants cannot have a criminal record. Also, Dcn. Jim is working with Secretary of Corrections on possible future programs.
- The council is continuing to develop a guideline for districts defining the mission of the district.
- Deacons Petrie, Normann and Klingseisen are continuing to develop the schedule, theme and program for this year's deacon retreat. Based on the preliminary work done by the group, the retreat should be very fruitful.
- The Deacon Council welcomed Dcn. Mike Skupian, the new representative for Districts 4, 5 and 12, and Dcn. Ted Faust, who will be the new president pro tempore.
- The council thanked Deacons Scott Wiese and Jim Matthias for their dedicated work.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 19, 2023. The plan is to meet in person.

NADD CONFERENCE 2023

Deacons Manuel Maldonado and Jim Starke attended the National Association of Deacon Directors this June at the Pontifical College Josephinum. The focus was on the formation of deacons after ordination. Specifically, the conference focused on the changes to the norms outlined in the revised National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of the Permanent Deacons. Below are some of the many topics discussed:

- The formal post-ordination formation of newly ordained deacons was expanded from three years to five years. Although all active deacons are required to perform twenty hours of continuing education annually, the program for newly ordained deacons must be more defined and reviewed annually. Currently, the Archdiocese of Milwaukee offers a single Saturday workshop in addition to the continuing education opportunities normally offered to deacons throughout the year. The new five-year program is in the process of being developed which



Deacons Maldonado and Starke at the Pontifical College Josephinum

will include online courses.

- The new norms place a greater emphasis on family relationships. It is important that the Church takes into consideration and offers support to the wives and children of the deacon. The deacon's ministry within and outside the parish walls are built upon his relationship with God and his family. Care must be taken to allow wives to follow their own spiritual and ministerial journeys.

- Care must be taken to ensure that the deacon widows and widowers remain an essential part of the deacon community and that their emotional and spiritual needs are met. In many cases, simply fostering a sense of community among the group

helps manage the void created by the death of their spouse.

The four-day biannual event was attended by approximately 20 deacons along with 14 presenters. Next year's conference will focus on the formation of deacons pre-ordination.

Prayer Requests

Dcn. Gerry Ponec '81 The sister of Dcn. Dale Nees '09

Dcn. Jim Smallhoover '02 The sister and daughter of
Dcn. Don Kabara '77

Eneida Reyes, wife of
Dcn. Ed Reyes '07 The sister of Dcn. Joe Wenzler '94,
who passed away in May

Lee Cesarec, widow of
Dcn. Michael '84

**RECENTLY DECEASED
AND THEIR FAMILIES**

Amy Starke, Wife of
Dcn. Jim Starke '16 Dcn. Bill Banach '83



DATES TO REMEMBER

Oct. 22, 2023

2023 Memorial Mass, 3 p.m., Bishop Jim Schuerman, St. Katherine Drexel, Beaver Dam

Nov. 3-5, 2023

Deacon Retreat, Redemptorist Retreat Center; Dcn. Larry Norman, Directing; Bishop Haines, Saturday Mass presider; Rev. Nathan Reesman, Sunday Mass presider

Dec. 2, 2023

Deacon Wives Morning of Reflection, MMCPCC, time and theme to be determined

April 13, 2024

Deacon Day 2024: St. Gregory the Great Parish (63rd and Oklahoma), time and theme to be determined

May 4, 2024

Post-Ordination Formation Class of 2022, MMCPCC, times to be determined



**ARCHDIOCESE
of MILWAUKEE**

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

Deacon Jim Starke, Director Deacon Services, (414) 769-3409
Deacon Dale Nees, Director Diaconate Formation, (414) 758-2212
Manuel Maldonado-Villalobos, Associate Director, (414) 758-2207
Maritza Espino, Associate Director of Pastoral Formation, (414) 758-2205



Archdiocese of Milwaukee
*This ministry is funded by the
Catholic Stewardship Appeal.*