

Office for Diaconate Formation
Archdiocese of Milwaukee
Archbishop Cousins Catholic Center



The Servant

From Deacon John's Desk

Dear Friends of the Diaconate,

It is hard to believe, but with this issue of *The Servant* I close out my working career with the Archdiocese of Milwaukee as Director of Diaconate Formation. My tenure over these eighteen years of formation has been most fulfilling and personally transformative. I have been privileged to minister with Manuel Maldonado and Charmaine Pfeifer who have been the very best, faith filled, collaborative servant-leaders one could have been partnered with. I will miss them greatly. As a shepherd, I have been so blessed to walk with many holy men and their wives, called by God to become sacraments of service for the local Church. Each and every ordination has been a gift of joy, satisfaction and humility to see them go off into ministry "humbly with their God...". I have marveled at how the Lord has brought into the formation program so many talented, deeply spiritual and brilliantly qualified men and women to be formators, committee members (C.O.A.S.) and faculty, sharing their love of Christ and individual areas of expertise for the good of the candidates. And lastly I have been so fortunate to experience the cooperation of Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology, St. Mary of the Lake - Mundelein Seminary, Cardinal Stritch and Marquette Universities and their generosity and enthusiasm, providing capable and qualified members of their faculty to be a part of our formation program.

As I look to the immediate future, I am excited that Archbishop ListECKI will ordain seven men for service to the Archdiocese on September 8, 2018, while we will enroll our biggest aspirant class of twenty men and their wives on September 4, 2018. The twenty four men in the formation program will be placed in the able arms of Deacon Dale Nees, the new Director of Formation who comes to us from the Class of 2009. I leave with great confidence in his abilities to ably shepherd the aspirants and candidates toward whatever path awaits them, knowing that the Spirit will be his guide.

God bless all of you and know that you will continue to remain in my thoughts and prayers and that the Lord will continue to call men into ministry to lead the Servant Church to its destiny in Christ, deacon of the Father!

Yours in Christ the Servant,

Deacon John Ebel
Director



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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)

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Know our deacons: New Director for our Office

Greetings, I am Deacon Dale Nees. I was born and grew up right here in the Milwaukee Archdiocese in the town of Sturtevant with my mother, father, brother, and sister, along with scads of aunts, uncles and cousins close by. I happen to be the youngest in my family and came by my work ethic through my father who was a cement contractor. I have a creative side as well and initially aspired to be an artist. While I still love the arts, I was more fulfilled caring for others and became a Registered Nurse. I met my wife Barb while a student nurse and we married upon graduation at my home parish, St. Sebastian's (Sturtevant). We raised 3 boys (Joshua, Jason and Peter) and 1 girl (Aharon) then started all over with another boy (Adam) who will soon be twelve. I have been enriched by thirty-five amazing years ministering in healthcare assuming increasing leadership responsibilities.

The first time I felt the call it came as an interior prompting to investigate the Diaconate, but I was not of age. Still longing to deepen my relationship with Christ and his Church, I reconnected with the Franciscan spiritually I grew up with in grade school. After formation as an Inquirer, Aspirant and Candidate I was professed as a Secular Franciscan in 1990. I continued to sense a call to Diaconate along with my call as a Franciscan. I felt affirmed in this when at National Franciscan Gatherings I met other deacons who had received similar calls. I applied to the Diaconate Program and was initially deferred. Although this was confusing at first and accompanied by feelings of rejection, many reassured me that if God wants you as an ordained deacon it will happen. This counsel helped me to listen carefully and respond to the feedback I received. The result was admission to the class of 2009. When I look back I saw God's providence in the whole admissions experience and discernment process. I am reminded daily, by our class ordination photograph which hangs in our living room, of the blessing that those men and their wives have been for Barb and me in our lives in general, and specifically in diaconal ministry.

For me to be a deacon is to be a person open and ready to serve people, generous in promoting just causes, and avoiding attitudes that detract from being everybody's deacon at home, work, parish and other places. The three areas of diaconal ministry: Word, Liturgy, and Charity need to be always approached as one and influenced by the dynamically changing needs of the contemporary life. The relationship among these three areas can only be appreciated as diverse and complementary having their "point of departure and arrival in the Eucharist." Diaconal ministry means to me transformation of those served, the servant, and surroundings. Serving others if grounded in humility deepens and enriches the essential diaconal identity within the Body of Christ. For me diaconal ministry certainly has both its challenges and joys and so must be grounded by prayer and spiritual direction. Only then can it offer up a mirror for people to reflect and respond to their own call to serve others received at baptism. I have found and believe firmly that a commitment to on-going formation is necessary in sustaining the charge to make Christ the deacon who died for us all known.

One ministry I participate in is truck stop chaplaincy. It is a ministry of presence and radical availability. Some nights are busy, while other nights are slow. What matters most is showing up, having patience, and being prepared to listen to the drivers' challenges with life on the road and their faith stories.

I also have cultivated Native Ministry among the Ihanktonwan (Yankton) Sioux through our parish twinning relationship with St. Paul's Indian Mission in Marty, SD. Annually, a team works closely with Sr. Miriam Schindler to identify service projects especially for the frail and disabled members of the tribe. Over the past 16 years the relationship has matured, marked by a growing mutual trust and looking forward to seeing each other. I had the great privilege of traveling to the Sioux Spiritual Center for a course on "Basic Directions in Native Ministry." It was a full week with many topics led by indigenous people. I took part in a two-door sweat that was a phenomenal prayer experience. Back in Milwaukee I also participated in "talking circles" to sensitize care providers to the healthcare needs of indigenous people. Intercultural ministry has had a profound effect on me personally and the lens through which I view all ministry. God is not bounded by culture and it doesn't take long to appreciate another culture's spiritual journey if one is open and willing to work on setting aside the dominant culture's point of view.

Another ministry has been teaching in the Diaconate Formation Program. It has been a special grace to assist others in the discernment of a diaconal vocation and ultimately attending the ordinations of men I had in classes. I am sure that this contributed to my interest in applying for the Director of Diaconate Formation position as John moves toward retirement.



Know our deacons: New Director for our Office (Cont.)

Some ministry has been to the Order of Deacon itself as Senate President. One major addition during my term was the implementation of a defined Post-Ordination Program that benefits our newly ordained as they begin their ministry. This has enriched the understanding of the communal realities of the Order of Deacon which are better anchored going forward as a result.

Within the parish I chair the Prayer & Worship Committee, share in the baptismal preparation classes, assist with a variety of formation requests from our Religious Educators as needed, and coordinate the deacon schedule for assisting at Mass, preaching, baptisms outside of Mass, and preparing intercessions. We now have a better connection to all parish ministries with an eye on their continuing formation, developed team leaders for the Home Eucharistic Ministers, and a foundation for deepening the understanding of diaconal ministry earlier on in Religious Education Programs.

The thing I like most about being a deacon is assisting people to see and share their giftedness, recognizing how intentionally living out the grace of their baptisms as disciples of Jesus is a blessing in and outside the parish. Seeing and naming their potential for service authentically contributes “to the birth of the Church as a reality of communion, service, and mission.”

One of the greatest challenges is fostering a better understanding of diaconal ministry both within and outside of the Church. Overcoming this takes time and effort. I have had to be very clear that a deacon is more properly defined in terms of who he is rather than what he does so that the ministry is not reduced to mere functionalism. I have also had to make sure the pendulum does not swing the other direction toward clericalism. My strategies have included several approaches from clarifying questions as they arise, getting more involved earlier in Religious Education Programs, and developing formal presentations for various groups.

Another challenge is balance. I overcome this through focusing on being self-aware, but I also have safety nets in place. My first one is to consult my wife about any new requests and compare calendars. The second is to sound things out with my spiritual director as the situation dictates.

We know that deacons are a constitutive part of the church instituted by Christ. “Therefore, a church without a diaconate is a church that is incompletely manifested to the people” according to Frederick Campbell, when speaking of the Impact of the New National Directory. When I hosted a missionary priest from India we talked about deacons. I was saddened to hear that his only experience of deacons in his country were those who were ordained deacons already but not fit for priesthood, hence no permanent deacons. I thought to myself how sad, in a country with obviously so many diaconal needs. According to the most recent CARA report the United States has nearly 41% of the diaconate worldwide and even here we have areas where the diaconate is not manifest. There is still much to be done.



Congratulations and Thank You!!!

To our beloved Dcn. John Ebel. After eighteen years in service to our formation program for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, he is retiring. We are so grateful for his leadership, his knowledge and experience, his integrity, both personal and professional, his life example of Christ the Servant and most of all his friendship. Through his dedication to the service of the church, many men and women grew in their faith and in their leadership in service to the people of God. We have been truly blessed!

Deacon John retires from his job on September 15, but does not withdraw from his vocation to serve others. Our Office of Formation for the Diaconate wishes you the best in your retirement. Dcn. John and Maryann will be in our prayers.

With love and gratitude,

Manuel and Charmaine

Conociendo Nuestros Diáconos: Nuevo Director de nuestra Oficina

Saludos, soy el diácono Dale Nees. Nací y crecí aquí en la Arquidiócesis de Milwaukee en la ciudad de Sturtevant con mi madre, padre, hermano y hermana, junto con montones de tías, tíos y primos cerca de mí. Soy el más joven de mi familia y obtuve mi ética de trabajo a través de mi padre, que era contratista de cemento. También tengo un lado creativo e inicialmente aspiraba a ser un artista. Si bien aún amo las artes, estaba más satisfecho cuidando a los demás y me convertí en un enfermero registrado. Conocí a mi esposa Barb cuando era estudiante de enfermería y nos casamos, luego de graduarme, en la parroquia a la que pertenecía, St. Sebastian's (Sturtevant). Criamos 3 niños (Joshua, Jason y Peter) y 1 niña (Aharon) y luego comenzamos de nuevo con otro niño (Adam) que pronto tendrá doce años. Me he enriquecido con treinta y cinco años asombrosos ministrando en el cuidado de la salud, asumiendo responsabilidades crecientes de liderazgo.

La primera vez que sentí la llamada fue como una invitación interior para investigar el Diaconado, pero no tenía la edad requerida. Todavía anhelando profundizar mi relación con Cristo y su Iglesia, me volví a conectar con la espiritualidad franciscana, con la que crecí en la escuela primaria. Después de la formación como investigador (pre-aspirante), aspirante y candidato, hice la profesión como franciscano seglar en 1990. Seguí sintiendo un llamado a diaconado, junto con mi llamado como franciscano. Me sentí afirmado en esto cuando en las Reuniones Franciscanas Nacionales conocí a otros diáconos que habían recibido llamadas similares. Apliqué al Programa de diaconado y al principio se me aplazó. Aunque esto fue confuso al principio y estuvo acompañado de sentimientos de rechazo, muchos me aseguraron que, si Dios lo quiere como diácono ordenado, sucederá. Este consejo me ayudó a escuchar con atención y responder a los comentarios que recibí. El resultado fue la admisión a la clase de 2009. Cuando miro hacia atrás veo la providencia de Dios en toda la experiencia de admisión y el proceso de discernimiento. Todos los días, al ver la foto de mi clase en nuestra sala de estar, nos acordamos de la bendición que esos hombres y sus esposas han tenido para Barb y para mí en nuestras vidas en general y específicamente en el ministerio diaconal.

Para mí ser diácono es ser una persona abierta y dispuesta a servir a las personas, generosa en la promoción de causas justas y evitar actitudes que impidan ser un diácono para todos en el hogar, el trabajo, la parroquia y en otros lugares. Las tres áreas del ministerio diaconal: Palabra, Liturgia y Caridad necesitan ser siempre abordadas como una sola e influenciadas por las necesidades dinámicamente cambiantes de la vida contemporánea. La relación entre estas tres áreas solo se puede apreciar como diversa y complementaria teniendo su "punto de partida y llegada a la Eucaristía".

El ministerio diaconal significa para mí la transformación de aquellos a quienes servimos, el servidor y el entorno. Servir a los demás, si se basa en la humildad, profundiza y enriquece la identidad diaconal esencial dentro del Cuerpo de Cristo. Para mí, el ministerio diaconal ciertamente tiene sus desafíos y alegrías, por lo que debe estar basado en la oración y la dirección espiritual. Solo entonces puede ofrecer un espejo para que las personas puedan reflexionar y responder a su propio llamado a servir a los demás que recibieron en el bautismo. He encontrado y creo firmemente que es necesario, un compromiso con la formación permanente para sostener el encargo de hacer conocer a Cristo, el diácono que murió por nosotros.

Un ministerio en el que participo es en la capellanía de la "parada de camiones". Es un ministerio de presencia y disponibilidad radical. Algunas noches están ocupadas, mientras que otras noches son lentas. Lo que más importa es estar presente, tener paciencia y estar preparado para escuchar los desafíos de la vida en el camino de los conductores con y sus historias de fe.

También he cultivado el Ministerio nativo entre los Sioux de Ihanktonwan (Yankton) a través de nuestra relación de hermandad parroquial con la Misión India de St. Paul en Marty, Dakota del Sur. Anualmente, un equipo trabaja en estrecha colaboración con la Hna. Miriam Schindler para identificar proyectos de servicio especialmente para los miembros discapacitados y débiles de la tribu. En los últimos 16 años, la relación ha madurado, marcada por una creciente confianza mutua y deseos de encuentro. Tuve el gran privilegio de viajar al Centro Espiritual Sioux para un curso sobre "Instrucciones básicas en el Ministerio Nativo". Fue una semana completa con muchos temas dirigidos por indígenas. Tomé parte en un sudor de dos puertas que fue una



Conociendo Nuestros Diáconos: Nuevo Director de nuestra Oficina (Cont.)

experiencia de oración fenomenal. De vuelta en Milwaukee, también participé en "círculos de diálogo" para sensibilizar a los proveedores de salud sobre las necesidades de atención médica de los pueblos indígenas. El ministerio intercultural ha tenido un profundo efecto en mí persona y en la visión a través de la cual veo todo el ministerio. Dios no está limitado por la cultura y no se toma mucho tiempo para apreciar el camino espiritual de otra cultura si uno está abierto y dispuesto a trabajar para dejar de lado el punto de vista de la cultura dominante.

Otro ministerio es el estar enseñando en el Programa de Formación al Diaconado. Ha sido una gracia especial ayudar a otros en el discernimiento de una vocación diaconal y asistir finalmente a las ordenaciones de los hombres que tuve en las clases. Estoy seguro de que esto contribuyó a mi interés en solicitar el puesto de Director de Formación al Diaconado a medida que John avanza hacia la jubilación.

Otro ministerio en el que he estado, en el Orden del Diácono, es como Presidente del Senado. Una adición importante durante mi mandato fue la implementación de un programa definido de post-ordenación que beneficia a nuestros recién ordenados a medida que comienzan su ministerio. Esto ha enriquecido la comprensión de las realidades comunitarias del Orden del Diácono que están mejor ancladas en el futuro.

Dentro de la parroquia presido el Comité de Oración y Adoración, comparto en las clases de preparación bautismal, ayudo con una variedad de solicitudes de formación de nuestros Educadores Religiosos según sea necesario y coordino el horario de diáconos para asistir en Misa, predicar, bautizar fuera de la Misa y preparando intercesiones. Ahora tenemos una mejor conexión con todos los ministerios de la parroquia, con la vista puesta en su formación continua, líderes de equipo desarrollados para los Ministros de la Eucaristía en el hogar y una base para profundizar la comprensión del ministerio diaconal en programas de educación religiosa.

Lo que más me gusta de ser diácono es ayudar a las personas a ver y compartir sus dones reconociendo cómo, vivir intencionalmente la gracia de su bautismo como discípulos de Jesús, es una bendición dentro y fuera de la parroquia. Ver y nombrar su potencial de servicio contribuye auténticamente "al nacimiento de la Iglesia como una realidad de comunión, servicio y misión".

Uno de los mayores desafíos es fomentar una mejor comprensión del ministerio diaconal tanto dentro como fuera de la Iglesia. Superar esto requiere tiempo y esfuerzo. He tenido que dejar muy claro que un diácono se define más adecuadamente en términos de quién es él que de lo que hace, de modo que el ministerio no se reduce al mero funcionalismo. También he tenido que asegurarme de que el péndulo no gire en la otra dirección hacia el clericalismo. Mis estrategias han incluido varios enfoques a partir de preguntas aclaratorias a medida que surgen, involucrándose más en programas de educación religiosa y desarrollando presentaciones formales para varios grupos.

Otro desafío es el equilibrio (balance). Lo supero centrándome en ser consciente de mí mismo, pero también tengo redes de seguridad en su lugar. Mi primera es consultar con mi esposa sobre nuevas solicitudes y comparar calendarios. El segundo es consultar las cosas con mi director espiritual según lo dicte la situación.

Sabemos que los diáconos son una parte constitutiva de la iglesia instituida por Cristo. "Por lo tanto, una iglesia sin diaconado es una iglesia que se manifiesta de forma incompleta a las personas", según Frederick Campbell al hablar del impacto del nuevo directorio nacional. Cuando recibí a un sacerdote misionero de la India, hablamos sobre los diáconos. Me entristeció escuchar que su única experiencia con los diáconos en su país eran los que ya habían sido ordenados diáconos, pero no aptos para el sacerdocio, por lo tanto, no tenían diáconos permanentes. Pensé para mí mismo qué triste en un país con obviamente tantas necesidades diaconales. Según el informe más reciente de CARA, Estados Unidos tiene casi el 41% del diaconado en todo el mundo e incluso aquí tenemos áreas donde el diaconado no es manifiesto. Aún hay mucho por hacer.



Other News / Otras Noticias

Ordination to the Permanent Diaconate: September 8th, 2018 at St. John the Evangelist Cathedral

We share with you the joy of the ordination of the Class of 2018 to the Sacred Order of Deacon. Our Archbishop Jerome E. ListECKI will preside at the celebration. Seven candidates will become deacons as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the restoration of the permanent diaconate. Keep in your prayers Douglas Gundlach, Michael Hoffman, James Matthias, Anton Nickolai, Larry Ramsey, Jr., Moualee Thao and Timothy Waldoch. We remember in a very especial way Paul Schumacher, former candidate for ordination, who entered into eternal life on July 8th, 2018.

Ordenación al Diaconado Permanente: 8 de septiembre de 2018 en la Catedral de San Juan Evangelista

Compartimos con ustedes la alegría de la ordenación de la Clase de 2018 a la Sagrada Orden del Diácono. Nuestro Arzobispo Jerome E. ListECKI presidirá la celebración. Siete candidatos se convertirán en diáconos mientras celebramos el 50 aniversario de la restauración del diaconado permanente. Tenga en sus oraciones a Douglas Gundlach, Michael Hoffman, James Matthias, Anton Nickolai, Larry Ramsey, Jr., Moualee Thao y Timothy Waldoch. Recordamos de manera especial a Paul Schumacher, candidato a la ordenación, que entró en la vida eterna el 8 de julio de 2018.

Formation classes for 2018-2019:

We are continue our formation this year with 4 candidates that proceeded to their third year of formation. At the same time we welcome a group of 20 men with their wives to the Aspirancy path of 2018-2019. This is so far one of the biggest groups accepted into the formation program. Please keep our Candidates and Aspirants in your prayers.

Clases de formación para 2018-2019:

Continuamos nuestra formación este año con 4 candidatos que avanzaron a su tercer año de formación. Al mismo tiempo, damos la bienvenida a un grupo de 20 hombres con sus esposas al camino del Aspirantado del 2018-2019. Este es, hasta ahora, uno de los grupos más grandes aceptados en el programa de formación. Por favor, tenga a nuestros Candidatos y Aspirantes en sus oraciones.

Inquiry for Discernment Sessions

Schedule for Men and Wives (if they are married) Interested in the Permanent Diaconate Fall 2018

Waukesha Area Fall 2018 (West)

Place: Home at 276 Ridgeway Path Oconomowoc WI 53066
(Dcn. John and Rita Mezydlo Home)

Dates and Time: Wednesday Evenings from 6:00 to 8:00 PM
September 26, and October 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 of 2018

To register: Dcn. John Mezydlo at 602-885-1642
or e-mail: jmezydlo@lakelandautogroup.com

Racine Area: Fall 2018 (South)

Place: St. Sebastian Church, 3100 95th Street, Sturtevant, WI 53177-2618

Dates and Time: Tuesday Evenings from 6:00 to 8:00 PM
November 6, 13, 20, 27 and December 4, 11 of 2018

To register: Dcn. Eric Sewell at 262-886-6057
or e-mail: deaconerics@gmail.com

“More sessions and regions will be announced as they are available”

NOTE: Participation in all six sessions is required for men interested in exploring a vocation to the diaconate (If married: WIVES ARE REQUIRED TO ATTEND ALL SESSIONS).
Inquirers should contact the Office for Diaconate Formation for a preliminary interview before or at least during the first two sessions at 414-758-2207 with Manuel Maldonado.



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