

Office for Diaconate Formation
Archdiocese of Milwaukee
Archbishop Cousins Catholic Center



The Servant

From Deacon John's Desk

Dear Friends of the Diaconate,

As I write this column the weather has gone from "springtime" in February back to a March "wintertime" lion! However, here in the ODF things are buzzing warmly as the winter semester prepares to end in four short weeks. In this issue we took the time to "warmly" remember the excitement that the ordination of the Class of 2016 brought into our lives. We asked each new deacon to share their impressions of their formation time, sense of their new identity and why they ultimately pursued the diaconate. We hope you enjoy their thoughtfully candid and pragmatic reflections as much as we did!

To update you on the progress of the class of 2018 candidates; they are busy with canon law, sacraments and introduction to preaching. Deacon Dr. Steve Kramer from *Sacred Heart School of Theology* is our new adjunct faculty professor of homiletics. Deacon Steve picks-up from where Fr. Joseph Juknialis left off to begin his retirement. In the upcoming summer semester the candidates are looking forward to their 50 hr. pastoral field placement experience in their respective parishes.

The aspirants seem to have found their traction and appear to be on pace with adjusting to the realities of formation and the challenges that balancing it with family and work can bring.

Recruitment for the future class of 2022 is also in full swing. Inquiries are down significantly from previous years. We have asked deacons and pastors to personally invite at least four men from their parish who appear to have the characteristics of the deacon and to consider attending the regional *Inquiry for Discernment* sessions in preparation for the next admission window. Applications will be sought in January 2018 for the 2022 class. Please join us in seeking servant leaders for tomorrow's Church today! "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborer's are few..." won't you join us to "...ask the harvest master to send out laborers for his harvest?" (Mt: 9: 37-38)

Yours in Christ the Servant,
Deacon John



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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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Our New Deacons

Six months after being ordained, we asked our class of 2016 to answer three questions for the newsletter. The questions were:

1. How would you describe your formation experience ?
2. What does "deacon" now mean to you today?
3. Why did you want to be ordained as a deacon?

Here are their responses.



Theodore J. Faust

From: Basilica of Saint Josaphat, Milwaukee

The formation program for the Diaconate in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee is intellectually exhilarating and ordered towards growth in the spiritual realm. St. Francis of Assisi once wrote that "I am

what I am in the eyes of God -no more and no less". The Formation helps a man (and his wife) understand that simple truth within the core of their being. It is only when a person can walk away from the distractions in his life that obscure this truth, that we can begin to serve others who are marginalized, forgotten and excluded. It is only when we are emptied of these extraneous layers that we can authentically be with people at the most joyous times of their lives - and the most difficult. It can be a difficult thing to do - but I can't imagine anything more fulfilling.

Steve F. Pemper



From: St. Augustine, West Allis and St. John the Evangelist, Greenfield:

I would liken my experience in the program much like opening a box of individual puzzle pieces. They all seem to come together to complete the entire puzzle, after ordination into ministry. I have had those "Oh that's why we were given that

class/workshop" moments. We were very blessed to have so many wonderful teachers who helped form us as a group, and individually. Looking back, the formation program really helped me prepare for ministry, and also helped me grow in my faith journey as well. I always felt I was on a certain path during formation, and the staff did a great job helping me focus on my own individual journey. I will always be so grateful to the program for preparing me to become a servant of Christ. Being a Deacon to me is all about learning how to "let go of the rope". The more I learn how to surrender in service, the more fulfilling it has become for me. I feel so honored to represent the Church in ministry. When I have those encounters with others, I have recognized God working in me, as he helps me grow in my faith as well. To me, being a Deacon is about remaining open to that "give and take" and to allow God to work through me. "Why did I want to be ordained a Deacon?" I keep asking myself this all the time... ha-ha. I felt called to the Diaconate through prayer and discernment. It has become my top priority each day when I wake up to fulfill God's will in my life. The role of the Deacon has always interested me as one of service, and connection to the people. Growing up I felt a sense of missionary as being a part of my vocation. Deacons are called to bring the light of Christ to the world.



Henry O. Reyes

From: St. Anthony and St. Hyacinth, Milwaukee

The Deacon Formation program was an oasis in the midst of the busyness and hectic life of family and work. Apart from learning so much, learning to love the Church even more, I experienced a deepening of my

prayer life for which I will forever be grateful. Being a Deacon is a privilege and an honor that I do not deserve. Being a Deacon has allowed me to enter naturally into individual and family's lives at their times of most need and most vulnerability to bring faith, hope and love to situations that can be very painful and challenging. I did not want to be anything, my lazy butt just wanted to be a couch potato, but I felt that God was calling me to be his Deacon. I reluctantly gathered information about the program, I hesitatingly joined the discernment sessions but then God's dream for me and my own goals started to match up when I was touched by some of the videos shown at the discernment sessions. What struck me was "being an icon of Christ the servant"; it was an image and a reality that I could not get out of my head and heart after that day. Christ wants to be in this world as one who serves, which is what a Deacon can do for others. That is what I hope to do as well.



Joseph M. Senglaub

From: St. Bruno, Dousman and St. Paul, Genesee Depot

My understanding of what it means to be a deacon evolved over my formation in the diaconate program. I came to realize the role was far greater than merely assisting at Mass or performing various

sacraments. The journey from considering the program to ordination has been truly one of God's greatest gifts ever given to me and my wife. We experienced together tremendous graces and friendships as we grew in love, wisdom and understanding.

To be a deacon now encompasses a way of life that no longer begins with me or is about me, rather, it is all about the greater glory of God and living to embrace a calling to be set apart from the secular world. This calling of discipleship involves formation but must continue beyond the ordination. The growth is akin to a vessel leaving a safe harbor to venture into the sea where it belongs and was instructed and constructed to go. So why would anyone desire to become a deacon? I recently spoke to my brother-in-law about this same question and honestly in the most basic sense, why would anyone not desire to follow God's calling in your life? If you consider the diaconate know that the program will use the Holy Spirit's grace of guidance to be sure you are called. If you hear the call or more accurately "feel" a sense of being called, answer as Samuel did in the Old Testament, "Here I am Lord, your servant is listening". Follow His calling and your life will be filled with love, graces and understanding. Who could ask for anything more, not I. Thank you Lord.

Our New Deacons



James J. Starke

From: St. Boniface, Germantown

My experience in the program has been life changing. Through the ODF and the instructors, I have come to recognize the gifts God gave me and to be able to discern God's call.

Formation was not without its challenges and struggles as I moved

from "Oh Geez, I'm not worthy" to recognizing the needs of others and having a skillset to meet those challenges. So many times I experienced that pain in the stomach and having my palms sweat, that I have come to realize that this is all part of the call. Being out of the program for six months, I have come to appreciate how thoroughly the program prepared us. The two images that I try to remind myself daily is the icon of Christ the Servant and the call to be a servant leader. There is a holiness in having the humility to accept the role as the obedient servant of God and the Church as it reaches out to the world in the ministries of the Word, the sacraments, and charity. Sometimes that requires one to take the lesser position. Other times it means accepting the leadership role. It may sound overly pious, but I never allowed myself to approach the diaconate as something I wanted to do. From the very beginning, I felt it was a call. Not being an expert of identifying God's call, I relied heavily on the ODF and the instructors to help me discern. As I progressed through the program, I began to recognize within myself the gifts God gave me and how they can be put to good use. I also began to experience the peace and joy that comes from answering God's call. As I grew through the formation program, I was able to recognize the deacon in myself. It was not a question of wanting to be a deacon. Rather it was recognizing the deacon that was already there.

Are you considering serving the Church as an Ordained Deacon?

The Church calls men to be deacons "in-service" to the People of God. If you are a man (married or single), that feels this call and wants to know more, please contact the Office for Diaconate Formation at 414-758-2202 or ebelj@archmil.org.

Now is the time to prepare; Inquiry for Discernment sessions are forming for men who would like to enter the application process to begin in January of 2018!

www.archmil.org/ImaDeacon

(Please see the current sessions in the back)

Un Nuevo Diácono

Queremos compartir las respuestas de nuestro diácono hispano en esta columna de una forma mas amplia para todos aquellos hermanos hispanos que leen nuestro boletín. A continuación van a ver las preguntas con sus respuestas. Después de seis meses de su ordenación, Dc. Henry comparte un poco de su experiencia.



Henry O. Reyes

From: St. Anthony and St. Hyacinth, Milwaukee

1. ¿Cómo has sido tu experiencia en el programa de formación?

El programa de formación para el diaconado fue para mí una pausa importante en medio de la vida tan

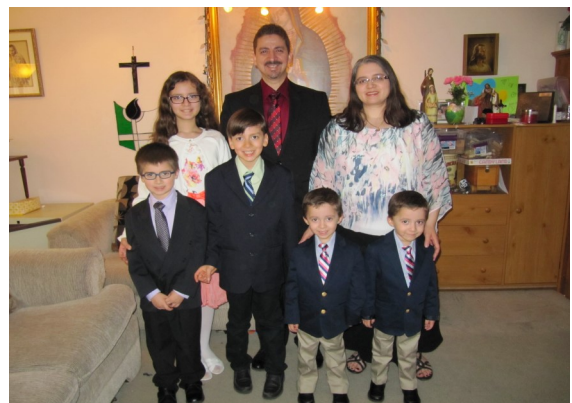
frenética y llena de ocupaciones, trabajos y deberes. Aparte de aprender tanto, aprender amar la Iglesia aún más, aprender a ver a Cristo en el prójimo, yo experimente una profundización en mi vida de oración por la cual siempre estaré agradecido.

2. ¿Qué significa ser diácono para ti?

Ser Diacono es un honor y privilegio que no merezco. Por ser Diacono he entrado naturalmente en la vida de individuos y familias en los tiempos más delicados y vulnerables de sus vidas, trayendo fe, esperanza y amor a situaciones que pueden ser muy difíciles y dolorosas. Sea la visita a un ser querido de la parroquia que está hospitalizado o la muerte de un parroquiano, yo puedo entrar en nombre de Cristo donde seguramente Cristo entraría si anduviera en cuerpo y sangre hoy día. Es verdaderamente una parte de mi vida por la cual le doy gracias a Dios todos los días.

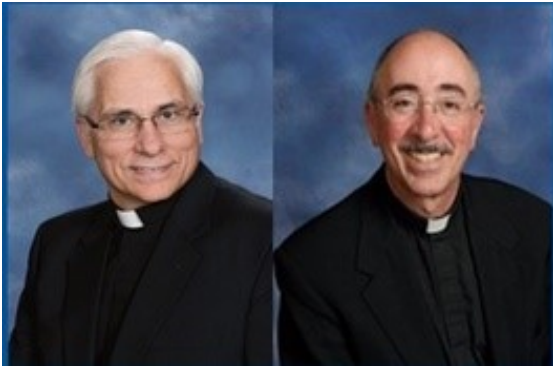
3. ¿Por qué quisiste ser ordenado diácono?

Yo no estaba buscando ser Diacono ni ninguna otra cosa. Mi deseo perezoso era sentarme en el sofá y ver televisión, pero sentía en mi oración que el Señor me llamaba al diaconado. Sin muchas ganas busqué información sobre el diaconado, para decir que le había cumplido a Dios, me fui a las clases de discernimiento y ahí fue que el sueño que Dios tenía para mí y mis propias metas empezaron a emparejarse cuando vi un video. Lo que me tocó fue la idea de "ser imagen de Cristo el servidor", era una imagen y una realidad que no podía sacar de mi cabeza después de ese día. Cristo quiere estar en este mundo como uno que sirve a los demás, y esto es lo que un Diacono puede hacer por los demás, hacer presente en sus palabras, sus gestos y su persona al mismo Cristo servidor.



Dc. Henry Reyes y su familia

Welcome to our two new Bishops



Picture from: www.archmil.org

Welcome and Congratulations

The Diaconate Formation Program would like to congratulate and welcome our soon-to-be new Auxiliary Bishops, Bishop-elect Jeffrey R. Haines and Bishop-elect James T. Schuerman, both Wisconsin natives. They were elected on January 25, 2017 and will be ordained on March 17, 2017, on the feast of Saint Patrick. May God bless and guide their steps in their new mission of being shepherds for the Church of southeastern Wisconsin.

Felicidades y Bienvenidos

El Programa de Formación para el Diaconado quiere felicitar y dar la bienvenida a nuestros futuros Obispos Auxiliares: Obispo electo Jeffrey R. Haines y Obispo electo James T. Schuerman. Ambos nativos de Wisconsin. Ellos fueron electos el día 25 de enero, 2017 y serán ordenados obispos el día 17 de marzo, 2017 en la Fiesta de San Patricio. Dios bendiga y guíe sus pasos en su nueva misión de ser pastores en la Iglesia del sureste de Wisconsin.

Inquiry for Discernment Program Spring 2017

(In English)

Those considering the Diaconate should first reflect on their qualities and qualifications, and decide whether they are suited to serve. For those men interested, we are offering a series of sessions to help them discern the call to the Permanent Diaconate. These sessions are offered by region. Here is the schedule: (we will be posting more dates and regions as they become available).

Region: Oconomowoc

Dates: March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 and April 6 of 2017

Facilitators: Dcn. John and Rita Mezydlo

Contact and Registration: jmezydlo@lakelandautogroup.com or 602-885-1642 (Address will be provided when you contact them)

Region: Racine-Sturtevant

Dates: March 22, 29 and April 5, 12, 19 and 26 of 2017

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

Facilitators: Dcn. Eric Sewell

Contact and Registration: deaconerics@gmail.com or 262-886-6057

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

