



DIAKONIA

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April 2017



(54) By virtue of their ordination, a sacramental fraternity unites deacons. They form a community that witnesses to Christ, the Deacon-Servant.

-The National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States

Upcoming Events

Chrism Mass

Monday, April 10, 2017

11:00 AM

(Arrival time 10:00 AM)

Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament,
Altoona

Parish Mission

Featuring Dr. Edward Sri

April 23 and 24, 2017

7:00 - 9:00 PM

ANNUAL DIACONATE RETREAT

**"Exploring the Prophets & Unlocking
Revelation"**

Thomas Smith, Retreat Master

Fr. John Euker, Retreat Chaplain

June 12-15, 2017



Thomas Smith

Author, retreat director, and parish mission leader, Thomas Smith will lead us in exploring the powerful relevance of the Old Testament Prophets today, their connection to the Diaconate and how to embrace their message in our lives as deacon families in ministry and effectively communicate their message to today's world.

April 24th - Special Day Program

1:30-3:30 PM

St. Benedict Parish, Johnstown

**This event is open to
all members of the diocese**

Priest Ordination

Saturday, May 27, 2017

10:00 AM

Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament,
Altoona

Annual Diaconate Retreat

*"Exploring the Prophets &
Unlocking Revelation"*

**Thomas Smith, Retreat Master
Fr. John Euker, Retreat Chaplin**

June 12-15, 2017

Antiochian Village, Bolivar
Retreat begins Sunday with registration at
3:30 PM and concludes Thursday
following the 10:00 AM closing Mass

Rite of Candidacy

Saturday, September 16, 2017

4:00 PM

Saints Peter and Paul, Philipsburg

Rite of Lector and Acolyte

Saturday, October 21, 2017

4:00 PM

St. Mary, Hollidaysburg

Quick Links

[National Directory](#)

[Liturgy of the Hours](#)

[USCCB Daily Readings](#)

[Daily Reflections](#)

BIRTHDAYS

APRIL

03 Mike Condor
12 Cathy McFee
13 Sam Albarano
13 Sarah Becker
13 Christopher Conner
14 Grace Szwarc
15 Barbara Condor
15 Gene Neral
19 Diane Little
25 Karen Janosik
28 Tom Buige

MAY

10 Helen Buige
13 Jack Orlandi
13 Nancy Russo
16 Bernadette Visinsky
19 Barbara Neral
26 Patricia Leap
26 Kathleen Weaver

A convert to the Catholic Church in 1996, Thomas received his Bachelor of Philosophy from the Pontifical Lateran University and completed graduate theological studies at St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Denver. He is the co-author of *"Revelation: The Kingdom Yet to Come," "The Prophets: Messengers of God's Mercy,"* and an international presenter for the *Great Adventure Bible Timeline*. Thomas lives on his family ranch in southeastern Idaho where he continues to explore the riches of our faith.

To learn more about Thomas visit: www.gen215.org

Father John Euker from the Greensburg Diocese will be our retreat chaplain. He will celebrate daily Mass with us and be available for spiritual consultation and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

"Deacons Are Configured to Christ the Servant"



**Excerpts from the papal address given
by Pope John Paul II to a joint plenary
assembly of the Congregation for
Clergy and the Congregation for
Catholic Education
November 30, 1995**

Fidelity to Catholic Tradition should mark a deacon's ministry

Reflecting on the ministry and life of permanent deacons....The vocation of the permanent deacon is a great gift of God to the Church and for this reason is "an important enrichment for the Church's mission." (CCC, No. 1571)

What is specific to the life and ministry of deacons could be summarized in a single word: *fidelity*...This fidelity is, first of all, an invitation to promote throughout the Church a *sincere respect for the theological, liturgical and canonical identity* proper to the sacrament conferred on deacons, as well as for the demands required by the ministerial functions which, in virtue of

JUNE

01	Kathy Woomer
07	Jim Woomer
11	Sam Cammarata
17	Jill Kolonich
19	John Roth
26	Don Gibboney

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Tom & Cathy McFee
4/5/86

Bill & Karen Underhill
5/3/69

Jim & Kathy Woomer
5/3/69

Joe & Anne Dalla Valle
5/18/74

Chuck & Sherry Ahearn
5/21/88

Phil & Anne Gibson
5/29/65

John & Grace Szwarc
5/30/64

Dave & Patricia Hornick
6/4/83

Sam & Joan Cammarata
6/12/76

John & Rosmary Concannon
6/21/52

RITE OF CANDIDACY

receiving Holy Orders, are assigned to them in the particular churches.

By the imposition of the bishop's hands and the specific prayer of consecration, the deacon receives a *particular configuration to Christ*, the Head and Shepherd of the Church, who for love of the Father made himself the least and **servant of all**.

Sacramental grace gives deacons the necessary strength to serve the people of God in the *diakonia* of the liturgy, of the word and of charity, in communion with the bishop and his presbyterate. By virtue of the sacrament received, an *indelible spiritual character* is impressed upon him, which marks the deacon permanently and precisely as a minister of Christ. The Church expects of the permanent deacon a faithful witness to his ministerial state.

Magisterium has clearly described deacon's tasks

In particular he must *show a strong sense of unity* with the successor of Peter, with the bishop and with the presbyterate of the Church for whose service he was ordained and incardinated. His relations with his own bishop, with the priests, with other deacons and with all the faithful should be marked by a *diligent respect for the various charisma and duties*.

The exercise of the diaconal ministry - like that of other ministries in the Church - requires *per se* of all deacons, celibate or married, a *spiritual attitude of total dedication*. Although in certain cases it is necessary to make the ministry of the diaconate compatible with other obligations, to think of oneself and to act in practice as a "part time deacon" would make no sense. The deacon is not a part-time employee or ecclesiastical official, but a minister of the Church. His is not a profession, but a mission!

The deacon is called to be a person open to all, ready to serve people, generous in promoting just social causes, avoiding attitudes or positions which could make him appear to show favoritism.

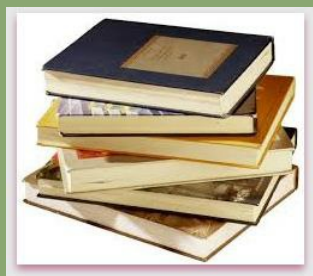
Spiritual Life Must Be Sustained by Personal Prayer



Bishop Mark accepted Jerry Nevling, (pictured with his wife Lori), as a candidate for the Permanent Diaconate on Saturday, March 4, 2017.

Mass was celebrated at Saints Peter & Paul Parish in Philipsburg where the Nevlings are members.

THE BOOK SHELF



[**God's Doorkeepers: Padre Pio, Solanus Casey & Andre Bessette**](#)

by Joel Schorn

[**Peter: The Keys to Following Jesus**](#)

by Tim Gray

[**The Day the Revolution Began: Reconsidering the Meaning of Jesus's Crucifixion**](#)

by N.T. Wright

The spirituality of the diaconate "has its source in what Vatican Council II calls 'the sacramental grace of the diaconate' (*Ad Gentes*, 16)." By virtue of ordination this is defined by *the spirit of service*. "This service should first of all take the form of helping the bishop and the priest, both in liturgical worship and the apostolate...However, the deacon's service is also directed to his own Christian community and to the whole Church, to which he must foster a deep attachment because of her mission and divine institution" (*ibid.*, n. 2).

To fulfill his mission, the deacon therefore needs a *deep interior life*, sustained by the exercises of piety recommended by the Church (cf *Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem*, 26-27: AAS 59, 1967, 702-703). Carrying out ministerial and apostolic activities, fulfilling possible family and social responsibilities and, lastly practicing an intense personal life of prayer require of the deacon...that *unity of life* which can only be attained...through deep union with Christ.

To read **Deacons are Configured to Christ the Servant** in its entirety please:

[**"Click Here"**](#)

A Deacon's Wife Remembers and Reflects



By Johnna Gurr
with
Marcia Romanansky

I was busy dipping my spoon into a cup of hot minestrone when I heard the question, "Does anyone here know anything about spiritual direction?"

There was a long and noticeable silence. Then, coffee cups were stirred, and hot deli sandwiches consumed. I put down my soup spoon and blotted my lips with a napkin. "I do," I responded. "For several years, I have been meeting with a caring and knowledgeable religious sister."

The deacons' wives at my table on this retreat weekend turned toward me. The conversation had quickly gone from

[7 Secrets of Divine Mercy](#)

by Vinny Flynn

[Knowing the Love of God: Lessons from a Spiritual Master](#)

by Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange

[Strangers in a Strange Land: Living the Catholic Faith in a Post Christian World](#)

by Charles J. Chaput

[A Psalter for Couples](#)

by Pierre-Marie Dumont

[Last Testament: In His Own Words](#)

by Pope Benedict XVI

[Liturgy and Personality](#)

by Dietrich von Hildebrand

[I Burned for Your Peace: Augustine's Confessions Unpacked](#)

by Peter Kreeft

[The Character of the Deacon: Spiritual and Pastoral Foundations](#)

by Jame Keating

[Who Am I to Judge: Responding to Relativism with Logic and Love](#)

by Edward Sri

[Hurting in the Church: A Way Forward for Wounded Catholics](#)

by Fr. Thomas Berg

[Lent for Everyone: Matthew, Year A](#)

by N. T. Wright

[The Hour of Jesus: The Passion and Resurrection of Jesus According to John](#)

by Ignace De La Potterie

[Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week: From the Entrance Into Jerusalem to the Resurrection](#)

by Pope Benedict XVI

FROM THE CATECHISM.....

"Deacons share in Christ's mission and grace in a special way. The sacrament of Holy Orders marks them with an imprint ("character") which cannot be removed and which configures them to Christ, who made himself the 'deacon' or servant of all.

discussing our deacon husbands' Mass schedules and preparation of homilies to something highly spiritual and personal. But, after all, this was a retreat, and spiritual direction was the topic.

"But why would you do that?" asked one woman. I mentioned that my husband meets with a priest who is his spiritual director. As a deacon, it is a requirement for him. I have found that meeting with a spiritual director works for me as well.

"My church has a Mass each morning that I find very satisfying," added the lady with the curly hair, "but I've heard of this kind of guidance, and I would like to know more."

"Well, I've been considering spiritual direction," said the woman across the table. "The reason I asked is that, while my husband and my close friends are very supportive in talking about faith issues, it just isn't enough. I pray, fast, read the Scriptures, and even attend a Bible study. But I need something more." She nodded her head and smiled at me. "Tell us about your experience."

"Well... the main reason I sought spiritual direction was that I was also hungry for something more. My husband is attuned spiritually and has often given me excellent counsel. But I desired a slightly different spiritual perspective, one that would offer fresh insights and enrich my personal walk in supporting my husband's ministry." I took a long sip of my lukewarm coffee and glanced from face to face, seven in total at the dining room table. All eyes invited me to continue.

In their faces were inquisitive expressions creased with the experiences of life-times of both worry and laughter. I shared with them a time when I was single, when my spiritual enrichment occurred in my apartment while meditating at a makeshift prayer-corner consisting of a crucifix sitting atop some stacked cinder-blocks. Later, with marriage and motherhood, I then recalled that with each child-four in all-I would sing a hymn to them softly as I offered up night prayers sitting in a rocking chair. And now, with adult children ready to fly, I have again established a prayer-corner-this time in the basement-where I

Among other tasks, it is the task of deacons to assist the bishop and priests in the celebration of the divine mysteries, above all the Eucharist, in the distribution of Holy Communion, in assisting at and blessing marriages, in the proclamation of the Gospel and preaching, in presiding over funerals, and in dedicating themselves to the various ministries of charity."

(CCC, No. 1570)



Pope: Preach Gospel with courage, prayer, and humility

14 February 2017

(Vatican Radio) Courage, prayer, and humility: these are the traits that distinguish the great "heralds" who have helped the Church to grow in the world, who have contributed to its missionary character. Pope Francis was speaking at the morning Mass at the Casa Santa Marta, taking his inspiration from the Liturgy and from the example of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, the patrons of Europe, who are honored today. Cyril and Methodius have made Europe stronger.

There is need of "sowers of the Word," of "missionaries, of true heralds to form the people of God, like Cyril and Methodius, "good heralds," intrepid brothers and witnesses of God, patrons of Europe who have made Europe stronger. Pope Francis began his homily with these reflections, and then looked at three personality traits of an "envoy" who proclaims the Word of God. He spoke of the day's first Reading, with the figures of Paul and Barnabas; and of the Gospel from St Luke, with the seventy-two disciples sent out two-by-two by the Lord.

The Word of God is not a

pray surrounded by my beloved Bibles, spiritual materials and, of course, a crucifix.

"And, just like you," acknowledging the woman sitting across from me, "I still wanted more. Scripture inspired me-in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells us to make our requests to God the Father by being firm in our intent to ask, seek, and knock. If we ask, it will be given; if we seek, we will find; if we knock, the door will be opened. To recognize what God would have me do-for my purpose in life today and for my mission for the future-I have to be willing to hear from God. I need to wait for that still, small Voice just as the prophet Elijah did in ancient times. I yearn to sense that quickening and to allow my heart to lean in to hear that Voice."

"And you find that spiritual direction can help you seek and hear that Voice?" asked the woman at the far end of the table. I nodded affirmatively. "Having a face-to-face encounter with another person of faith has been invaluable," I explained. "We begin with prayer . . . inviting Jesus to be with us. My adviser usually opens with the comment: 'Since we last met, how has God been working in your life?' Then we examine together the ordinariness of my days to find those moments that are extraordinary-when God was revealing himself in the seemingly mundane happenings in my life. We discuss many challenging situations ranging from managing a job and the household to dealing with issues related to family, school, relationships, and my husband's commitments as a deacon."

"This all sounds very interesting," said the woman to my left as she expressively spoke with her hands. "This retreat has been wonderful, and to have another spiritual connection would be great. How have you worked all this out-how did you find your spiritual director?"

"Actually it was my husband who suggested this sister. She had an office nearby and had very reasonable rates. But it was essential for me to connect in spirit with a spiritual director. I believed that the first few sessions would indicate whether this kind of guidance was right for

suggestion; courage is necessary in order for it to sink in. The first trait of the "envoy" highlighted by Pope Francis is "frankness," which includes "strength and courage."

"The Word of God cannot be given as a proposal - 'well, if you like it...' - or like good philosophical or moral idea - 'well, you can live this way...' No! It's something else. It needs to be proposed with this frankness, with this force, so that the Word penetrates, as Paul says, 'to the bone.' The Word of God must be proclaimed with this frankness, with this force...only the Word of God proclaimed with this frankness, with this courage, is capable of forming the people of God."

The second trait after the courage of missionaries, is prayer. "The Word of God should be proclaimed with prayer, also. Always. Without prayer, you could have a good conference, good instruction: good, good! But it is not the Word of God. The Word of God can only come from a heart in prayer. Prayer, so that the Lord might accompany this sowing of the Word, so that the Lord might water the seed so that the Word will sprout. The Word of God should be proclaimed with prayer: the prayer of the one who proclaims the Word of God."

The true preacher is humble, otherwise things end badly. In the Gospel there is also a third interesting trait: The Lord sends His disciples "like lambs amid wolves": "The true preacher is the one who knows he is weak, who knows that he cannot defend himself. 'You are going out like a lamb among wolves' - 'But Lord, why would they eat me?' - 'You are going! This is the journey.' And I think it was Chrysostom who has a very profound reflection, when he says: 'But if you do not go like sheep, but you go like a wolf among wolves, the Lord, will not defend you: you'll have to fend for yourself.' When the preacher believes he is too intelligent, or when

me. So, I made an appointment, and then one every month after. That was several years ago. And I'm still going."

"Can you think of some issue in particular that she helped you with?" asked the same lady on my left. I looked down at my half-eaten lunch. My appetite had been redirected as I poured through the files stored in my brain-which one should I share?

"Yes, there was one particular situation where I needed advice. It pertained to the untimely death of my father and many unfinished issues that would forever remain that way. I was left with regret and an ache in my heart that gnawed right into my bones. Sister helped me journey through the grieving process. She sensed the urgency to help me change my attitude from the heaviness and guilt toward God's vision of mercy and hope. With this renewed vision we explored forgiveness and focused on letting go of resentment and seeking God's peace. Embracing forgiveness eventually made all the difference. It was difficult for me, but through her prayerful support and wise direction, my ailing heart found sweetness once again."

The woman on the other side of the table, her violet eyes bright with anticipation, said, "This sister seems to be an excellent counselor and wise person. A few years ago I was involved in spiritual direction with a kind-hearted and insightful priest, and his counsel helped a great deal. But he was moved to a parish that was too far away. I couldn't find anyone else. Just listening to you talk about this sister...well, I would consider seeing her myself."

Suddenly, from head of the table came a voice from the retreat house hostess, "Would anyone here at this table like a piece of freshly baked peach pie with some vanilla ice-cream?" All the heads of the women at our table nodded with broad smiles in anticipation of the delicious dessert. I nodded too, not only for the dessert, but in delight with the opportunity to share my spiritual experience with these wonderful deacons' wives. It had been a special moment, which I was blessed to have had.

the one who is responsible for carrying forward the Word of God tries to be clever - 'Ah, I can get along with these people' - just so, it will end badly. Or you will bargain away the Word of God: to the powerful, to the proud..."

And to emphasize the humility of the great heralds, Pope Francis recalled a story told to him by someone "who boasted of preaching the Word of God well, and who felt he was a wolf." After a good sermon, the Pope said, "he went to the confessional, and found there a 'great fish,' a great sinner, and he wept,... he wanted to ask for forgiveness." And "this confessor," the Pope continued, "began to swell up with pride" and "curiosity" and asked him which word had touched him so much "that he was moved to repent." "It was when you said," the Pope concluded, "let's move on to another topic." "I don't know if it's true," the Pope clarified, but it certainly is true that you will finish badly if carry the Gospel "feeling sure of yourself, and not like a lamb, whom the Lord will defend. Going forth courageously, with prayer and humility, like Cyril and Methodius.

And so, the Pope concluded, this is the missionary character of the Church and of the great heralds, "who have planted and have helped the Church to grow in the world. They were courageous, men of prayer, and humble." He concluded his homily with the prayer: May Sts. Cyril and Methodius, help us "to proclaim the Word of God" according to these criteria, as they did.

[Vatican Radio](#)

The voice of the Pope and the Church in dialogue with the World

My deacon husband never fails to inspire me to greater things for God. One goal he sets for us both is to have "a lifetime of ongoing spiritual discipline," something that brings us closer together in our marriage. Spiritual direction is part of this process. Just as he is required to have a spiritual director, I have assumed this responsibility as well because I see the potential of this approach deepening my relationship with God and gaining strength and grace for supporting his diakonia.

Reprinted from the January 2015 issue of *Deacon Digest Magazine*. Used with permission. For more information, please visit:

www.deacondigest.com

Bishop Appointment

Bishop Mark Bartchak has appointed Deacon James Woomer to the position of Spiritual Director for the Legion of Mary Altoona-Johnstown Curia.

This assignment will be in addition to his usual assignment as Permanent Deacon. Please keep Deacon Jim in your prayers as he begins this new ministry assignment.

Welcome Deacon George Wachter

Deacon George Wachter has relocated from Dallas Texas to the Altoona area. He requested and received faculties from Bishop Mark Bartchak to function in our diocese.

He will minister to the residents at the Village at Morrison's Cove. Deacon Wachter brings many years of experience in ministering to those in hospitals and nursing homes and we welcome him to our diaconal community. Please keep him in your prayers as begins his new ministry.

Pope Francis: Goal of Church Communications is to "Enter Into Dialogue With Men and Women of Today"

Speaking to participants of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, according to Vatican radio, Francis said: "The challenge is to rediscover, through the means of social communication as well as by personal contact, the beauty



Father Bernard Ezaki who recently hosted our **Day of Recollection** invites you to visit his newly designed webpage at: www.apologyanalogy.com

that is at the heart of our existence and our journey, the beauty of faith and of the encounter with Christ."

"I believe that the goal is to understand how to enter into dialogue with the men and women of today in order to appreciate their desires, their doubts and their hopes. They are men and women who sometimes feel let down by a Christianity that to them appears sterile and in difficulty as it tries to communicate the depth of meaning that comes with the gift of faith. We do in fact witness today, in the age of globalization, a growing sense of disorientation and isolation; we see, increasingly, a loss of meaning to life, an inability to connect with a "home" and a struggle to build meaningful relationships. It is therefore important to know how to dialogue and, with discernment, to use modern technologies and social networks in such a way as to reveal a presence that listens, converses and encourages. Allow yourselves, without fear, to be this presence, expressing your Christian identity as you become citizens of this environment. A church that follows this path learns how to walk with everybody."

To read the full text "[Click Here](#)"

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