

The ArchLou Deacon

DIACONAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF LOUISVILLE | JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2026



From the Diaconal Director

Dear Friends, My Dear Companions on the Journey,

Ongoing formation sustains a deacon's life of service by actively involving their wives through support and inclusion, thereby fostering the unity of sacramental vocations.

— cf. National Directory, no. 149



As we begin this new calendar year, we do so in full view of the many blessings the Lord has bestowed on us. During our Diaconal Assembly with Archbishop Shelton, I made reference to the enriching experiences of my visits to parishes, schools, or ministries within our various deaneries. As I continue to join many of you in your parishes as you effect ministry, I am moved by the zeal being felt by the people of the archdiocese as a result of your beatific efforts.

The effectiveness of the ministry of our deacons, and how our deacons have brought pastoral and spiritual care to the people of God is demonstrative of the Spirit moving through each of you on account of the graces you received at ordination. While sometimes it may seem that the administrative character of the diaconal office appears more material or temporal than pastoral, please be assured that Deacon Mark Preischel and I, on behalf of Archbishop Shelton, are committed to ensuring that continuous growth in spiritual, intellectual, pastoral, and human dimensions is preeminent.

Heartfelt gratitude is due to Deacon Dennis (Denny) Nash, my well-regarded predecessor, and so many “more ‘mature’ deacons” for their support as we collectively work to ensure formation rooted in the Church’s tradition to enable deacons to confront modern challenges, strengthen their relationship with Christ the Servant, and enhance humble, charitable service to the faithful.

Finally, I want to close with particular attention to the wives and widows of permanent deacons. These women within the diaconal community play a vital role in the deacon’s ministry, serving not merely as supportive figures but as a spiritual partner, a pastoral collaborator, and an exemplar of Christian virtue. Together, the deacon-couple form a union grounded in love and service, which is essential for fulfilling the deacon’s responsibilities in liturgy, the Word, and charity (*Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem* § III).

When wives and their deacon-husbands embody a unified spirit that is deeply committed to this collective mission of service, it further strengthens our community. By exemplifying the principles of Christ the Servant, we will further enhance our cohesion and effectiveness. ✝ —F. DeKarlos Blackmon

When lived out in faith, the ministry of married deacons within the domestic Church serves as a testament to Christ’s love for all. This unique role underscores the significance of their contributions to the Church, highlighting the interplay between their marital commitment and their ecclesiastical duties (cf. *National Directory*, no. 72). — DeKarlos

Archdiocese of Louisville Diaconal Ministry

Deacons, as ministers, are not exempt from the missionary obligation of the universal Church. Hence, deacons should always remain open to the *missio ad gentes* [mission to the nations] to the extent that professional or family obligations permit (cf. *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons*, §27).

Archbishop

Most Rev. Shelton J. Fabre

Director

Dr. F. DeKarlos Blackmon, OblSB

Associate Director

Deacon Mark A. Preischel

Secretary

Madeline Kincaid

Contact Information

Phone: (502) 636-0296

Fax: (502) 636-2379

Email: diaconate@archlou.org

Diaconal Ministry promotes the Diaconate by disseminating pertinent information, selecting and training candidates, providing opportunities for continuing education, and coordinating the pastoral supervision of ordained permanent deacons. In addition Diaconal Ministry provides support for the wives, widows, and families of the deacons.



From the Associate Director for Diaconal Formation

Pope Saint Paul VI inaugurated the first “Day of Peace” which was celebrated on January 1, 1968. This was in response to his 1967 encyclical letter, *Populorum Progressio* [On the Development of Peoples], which was in turn inspired by Pope Saint John XXIII’s 1963 encyclical letter, *Pacem in Terris* [On Establishing Universal Peace in Truth, Justice, Charity and Liberty].



In Saint Paul VI’s letter establishing the Day of Peace, he called for not only the Catholic Church to pray for peace but also for “all true friends of Peace” to dedicate their thoughts to peace on the first day of the year. Saint Paul VI hoped that this meditation would lead to education on, and the celebration of peace. By these small steps humankind would eventually be led to “the gift of Peace, which the world has so much in need.”

In my opinion, this call for the gift of Christ’s Peace is needed as much today as it was in 1968; the middle of the Cold War. Currently, Ukraine has been involved in a war since the Russian invasion on Feb. 24, 2022. Sudan has been involved in an active civil war since April 15, 2023. This has led to nearly 25 million people experiencing extreme hunger and even famine in Sudan (AP News, April 10, 2025). And although the “October 7 War” between Israel and the Palestinians in Gaza has stopped active fighting, tensions continue to simmer between Israel and Palestine. In these and other conflicts, not only have tens of thousands of military members died, tens of millions of civilians face displacement, starvation and have been innocent casualties.

We need to remember that peace is not merely the absence of war, but it is also safeguarding the goods of persons, free communication and respect for the dignity of all people (CCC 2304). Based upon this definition, our current polarized climate goes against the Gospel’s understanding of Peace as well. As Fr. Aaron Wessman reminded us in his April 2025 ongoing formation session on polarization, we are called to bring unity, not divisiveness. On this first day of the new year, let us resolve to model peace in our words and interactions with family, coworkers, and parishioners. Finally, echoing the closing words of Pope Paul VI’s letter, “Let no voice be missing from the great chorus of the Church, beseeching Christ to ‘Grant us Peace!’”

Peace, Deacon Mark

Ongoing Diaconal Formation

January 10, 2026

The Gospel of Matthew
with Father Eugene Hensel

Flaget Retreat Center, Louisville | 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

April 25, 2026

Finding Peace in the Chaos of Ministry
with Father Jeff Godecker

Saint Bernard Church, Louisville | 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

August 15, 2026

Healing and Reconciliation

Saint James Church, Elizabethtown | 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

November 7, 2026

Saints as Role Models

Saint Francis Xavier Church, Mt. Washington
8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Calendar of Important Events

March 31, 2026

Chrism Mass

Cathedral of the Assumption, Louisville | 10:30 a.m.

April 11, 2026

Mass of the Rite of Ordination of Deacons

Cathedral of the Assumption, Louisville | 11:00 a.m.

May 30, 2026

Mass of the Rite of Ordination of Priests

Cathedral of the Assumption, Louisville | 11:00 a.m.

June 5-7, 2026

Annual Diaconal Community Retreat

with Paulist Father Steven Bell
Saint Meinrad Archabbey - Bede Hall

September 26, 2026

Annual Deacon Assembly and Rite of Lector

Holy Spirit Church, Louisville | 8:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

October 3, 2026

75th Anniversary of Living Rosary

Cathedral of the Assumption, Louisville | 10:00 a.m.



CARE FOR THE SICK

Hospital Pastoral Care & Sacraments of Healing

Deacon Bryan Bush encourages priests and deacons to provide critical pastoral care by providing spiritual solace which creates an environment conducive to physical healing.

There are certain times in a family's life when it seems more important than ever to have the Church present for us. These times can be filled with uncertainty or even grief. Our faith can be seriously challenged. This is particularly true during a serious illness when we, or loved ones, are hospitalized. This challenge can be especially difficult for those who have been only marginally connected with the Church. The presence of the Church in the person of the priest, deacon, or lay minister provides critical pastoral care, which can give spiritual comfort and even set the conditions for physical healing. However, sometimes legal rules to which hospitals must adhere can lead to confusion, misunderstanding or even hurt feelings.

When patients are admitted to the hospital, they (or the patient's family) are asked if they have a religious preference. Once they state their preference (and perhaps their parish name), there is sometimes an assumption on the part of patients and their familyies that the hospital will immediately contact the parish. However, because of the very strict HIPAA law that went into effect in 1996, notification to anyone not authorized by the patient is no longer permitted. Health care professionals are held strictly accountable to these rules.

This can often lead to added suffering as the patient and/or family believes they have been ignored by the Church during a very real time of need. Of course, nothing could be further from the truth. For this reason, the archdiocese recommends that if —

— See HOSPITAL PASTORAL CARE continued on Page 6

LITURGIA?

Penitential Act, Sign of Peace, and Dismissal

Deacons play a vital role during Mass, proclaiming the Gospel, guiding the faithful, and serving at the altar, all in service to the liturgy, the word, and charity.

PENITENTIAL ACT. When the first or second form of the Penitential Act is used (the *Confiteor* or the dialogue "Have mercy on us, O Lord..."), the deacon has no speaking role whatsoever.

However, when the third form is used, the *Roman Missal* gives a standard set of invocations and seven other sets of sample invocations in Appendix VI (I and II for Advent and Christmas, III and IV for Lent, V and VI for the Easter, and VII for Reconciliation and Healing). While permitted to compose other invocations, deacons should familiarize themselves with the invocations in the *Roman Missal*. Any composed invocations should be modeled after those found in the missal, beginning with, "Lord Jesus,..." and followed by a brief description of a characteristic or action of Christ that is supported by scripture and Church teaching.

DISMISSAL. There are four options for the dismissal at the end of Mass:

1. **Go forth, the Mass is ended.**
2. **Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.**
3. **Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.**
4. **Go in peace.**

The deacon must use one of these texts, which may not be altered or added to in any way.

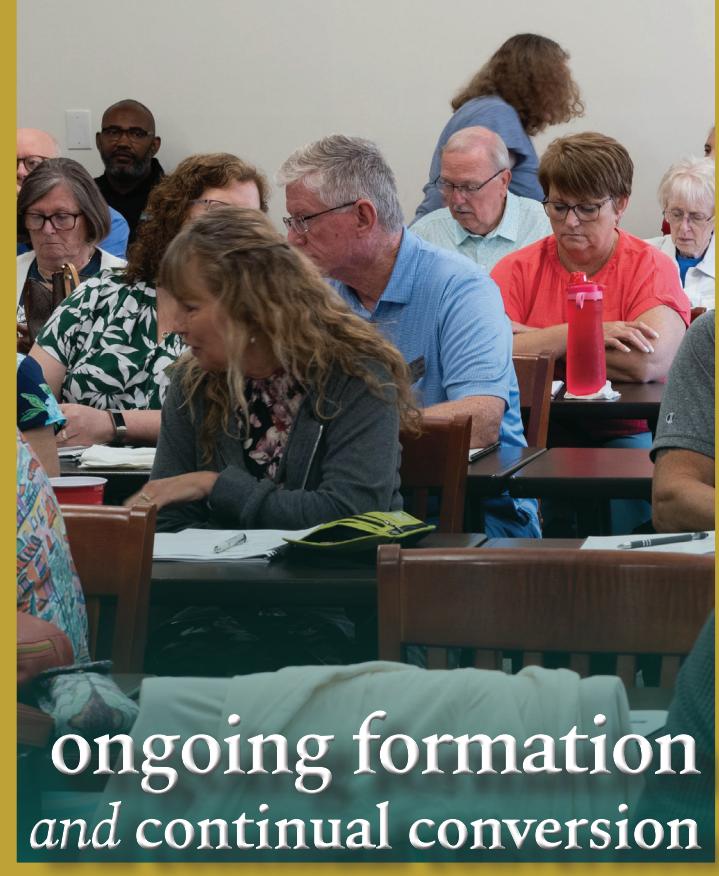
THE SIGN OF PEACE. If the sign of peace is to occur, the following invitation is said by the deacon:

Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

The *Roman Missal* gives no other options nor indication for potential variety. Therefore, this text may not be altered in any way. ✝



DR
KAREN
SHADLE



ongoing formation and continual conversion

Deacon Ken Roberts expounds on post ordination stage of diaconal formation as “first and foremost a process of continual conversion” (DMLPD, 1998, no. 65).

Greetings! Today I reach out to you, my fellow Deacons, to discuss a topic that is critical for our personal growth and ability to serve and minister effectively as deacons. Unfortunately, many of us overlook or do not give this topic the proper attention it deserves. In my short time as a permanent deacon, I, too, have experienced periods where I have ignored or put off this most important aspect of our ministry. It was the last thing on my mind during the first year after ordination. If you have not yet figured out what I'm referring to, the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States of America* refers to it as “The Post-Ordination Stage of diaconal formation” or more commonly, “On-going Formation.”

The *Directory* says, “The goal for this stage of formation is to responsibly address the various aspects of a deacon’s ministry, the development of his personality and, above all, his commitment to spiritual growth” (NDPD 251). Frankly, we cannot continue to grow in our diaconal call without the continued learning and experiences that “form” us. Our ordination was not the end of formation; on the contrary, it was just the beginning.

In my time accompanying the cohort of 2028, I am often reminded of the importance of not only the initial formation we all received, but of our need for on-going formation. Whether we are aware of it or not, we are discerning our call to the diaconate daily. Each of our ministry experiences has enhanced our ability to do what we are called to do: to serve the people of God.

I pray that since ordination each deacon has continued his on-going formation. While that is something that we need to do, we must go beyond that. If you think back to your own formation prior to ordination, what one memory stands out? I feel confident that for each of us that memory involves some or all our fellow candidates. That aspect of community and being able to share, learn, grow, and discern together is critical for our on-going formation and our diaconal ministry. None of us should be an island. God calls us not only to serve His people but to serve them together.

As the calendar flips to this new year, I invite each of us to make a concerted effort to take part in on-going formation. The diaconate office provides us many opportunities to come together to learn and



grow as a community. Please take advantage of these opportunities. Additionally, the deacon gatherings in each deanery offer a chance for more fellowship and learning opportunities. Please consider joining us on a regular basis. Doing so will make your ministry more fulfilling for both you and those whom you serve.

May the Lord bless you and fill you with His peace. ✕



DEACON
KENNETH
ROBERTS

HOSPITAL PASTORAL CARE



Continued from Page 4

— you or a loved one are hospitalized, please contact your parish office to let the staff know as soon as possible. If you are unable to contact the parish, please ask for the hospital chaplain. The hospital chaplain can then contact the parish to relay your desire for Holy Communion, to receive a hospital visit, or to see a priest for anointing and/or confession.

A complicating issue is that few hospitals in Louisville have a Catholic priest on the chaplaincy staff. University of Louisville, Jewish, and Baptist Health hospitals do not have a Catholic priest on staff. For that reason, the Archdiocese established a pastoral care team of deacons who effectively serve as on-call chaplains. The on-call deacons receive requests for spiritual care through the hospital chaplain offices. When the information is provided, we assess the needs of the patient and family. We then either make an immediate visit or contact one of the priests who volunteer their time in order to meet the sacramental needs of Catholic patients.

The chaplains, priests, and deacons who volunteer in this ministry are highly trained to provide pastoral care in hospitals. They are committed to providing for your spiritual needs. The archdiocese is fully committed to the pastoral care of the sick. Legal barriers, however, prohibit “automatic” notification. Please do not hesitate to make your request for pastoral care, whether directly through the parish or through hospital chaplains, as early as possible, especially if the request is for the sacraments of anointing of the sick or penance (reconciliation). ✕



DEACON
R. BRYAN
BUSH

DIACONAL MINISTRY

Annual Retreat

...to live out with “humble charity” diaconal ministry while assisting pastors for the good of God’s people



with Paulist Father Steven Bell
Saint Meinrad Archabbey - Bede Hall

June 5-7, 2026

Mark your calendars for the community retreat which satisfies the canonical requirement to make annual spiritual retreat.

Deacons are strongly encouraged to participate in this spiritual retreat to foster personal holiness and to support pastoral ministry, which is intrinsically linked to their role as clerics who connect the altar with the world through charity, preaching, and liturgical service. Together, the community will deepen its union with the Lord and holiness, engage in ongoing formation to realize ministerial effectiveness, and foster a sense of community and ecclesial accountability.

ABOUT THE RETREATMASTER. The Reverend Steven Bell, CSP, is a member of the Missionary Society of Saint Paul the Apostle (the Paulist Fathers), a Catholic society of apostolic life of pontifical right for men. The mission of the Paulist Fathers is to evangelize by preaching the gospel with the intention of converting people to Catholicism in a manner suited to the culture of the people.

Father Steven is a full-time missionary preacher who leads retreats, revivals, workshops, and parish missions that focus on reconciliation, healing and hope. He has extensive experience in campus ministry, parochial ministry, and media ministry — having served as associate director of Busted Halo, a Paulist Fathers media ministry.

Please be reminded that “[deacons] are obliged to participate in an annual spiritual retreat that is either organized or sanctioned by the Archdiocesan Office of Diaconal Ministry” (Directory for the Ministry of Permanent Deacons of the Archdiocese of Louisville, 2024, p. 3; cf. Code of Canon Law, can. 276, §4).

Happy Birthday

We praise you, because we are wonderfully made; wonderful are your works!

(Psalm 139:14)

JANUARY

- 1 - Steve Marks
- 2 - Linda Downs
- 3 - John Lewis
- 4 - Sam King
- 6 - Jimmy Richerson
- 7 - Paula Fargen
- 8 - Anthony Brown
- 9 - Frank Villalobos
- 13 - Jane Newton
- 14 - Cyndi Bent
- 15 - Robert Dever
- 15 - Bruce Sullivan
- 17 - Ellen Baker
- 17 - Rick Fagan
- 17 - Celia Schook
- 21 - Ken Carter
- 22 - Pat Drerup
- 22 - Joe Raibert
- 25 - Aurelio Puga
- 25 - Claudette Simmons
- 28 - Mary Jo Mattingly

FEBRUARY

- 4 - Kelly Stout
- 6 - Butch Kinsella
- 7 - Dave Dalton
- 8 - Theresa Marks
- 9 - Todd Auffrey
- 11 - Jim Stanford
- 12 - Tony Hasson
- 13 - Jim Abell
- 13 - Linda Carter
- 13 - Andy Heinsohn
- 15 - Ted Luckett
- 15 - Pat Wright
- 17 - Mike Tolbert
- 17 - Annette Turner
- 18 - Bob Bryant
- 20 - Patsy Markert
- 20 - Marysue McNally
- 20 - Mike Ryan
- 23 - Tracy Gitschier
- 25 - Steve Heil
- 25 - David Maxwell
- 25 - Mike Schmitt
- 26 - Charlie Brown
- 29 - Terry Roberts



Mass for Life Misa por la vida

Edificar una Cultura de Vida

To Build a Culture of Life

SATURDAY JANUARY 24 Saint Raphael the Archangel Church

with Archbishop Shelton J. Fabre | 10:00 a.m.

and Deacon Scott Haner of Saint Patrick Parish



ARCHDIOCESE OF LOUISVILLE | FAMILY AND LIFE | DEACON STEPHEN BOWLING, DIRECTOR | SBOWLING@ARCHLOU.ORG

Necrology of the Archdiocesan Diaconal Community

Since ancient times, the Church has consistently included prayers for both living and deceased members during every Eucharistic celebration. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* emphasizes that these intercessions highlight the communal nature of the Eucharist, underscoring that the offering is made for all members, both living and departed, who are called to share in the redemption brought forth by the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

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|------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| James Plummer | January 04, 2018 | John Shoultz | January 26, 2015 | J. Patrick Ebert | February 14, 2000 |
| Joe Mendoza | January 05, 2022 | Richard Steinmetz | January 27, 2012 | Joseph Chathaparampil | February 15, 2018 |
| Mattie Grundy | January 05, 1986 | Jon Hosch | January 30, 2008 | Don Flowers | February 17, 2022 |
| Marie Walther | January 08, 2001 | John Simpson | January 31, 2024 | Robert Grundy | February 17, 1994 |
| Cletus Ratterman | January 11, 2015 | Ralph Craycroft | February 02, 1983 | Delores Skeeters | February 17, 2000 |
| James Stanley | January 13, 2018 | Judy Wheatley | February 02, 2024 | James Sturgeon | February 18, 2018 |
| Joseph Dew | January 16, 2010 | Wayne Thieneman | February 03, 2019 | Robert Denk | February 22, 1989 |
| Mary Wall | January 17, 2016 | Margie Singer | February 03, 2022 | Audrey Thieneman | February 24, 2019 |
| Michael Layman | January 19, 2017 | Jo Bennett | February 05, 2007 | Joseph Livers | February 27, 2017 |
| Theresa Stanley | January 20, 2020 | Richard Dawson | February 08, 2003 | Norma Thomas | February 27, 2019 |
| Joseph Wall | January 21, 2016 | Helen Kiefer | February 09, 2009 | | |
| Ernest Singer | January 24, 2013 | James Bennett | February 10, 1998 | | |

REQUIESCANT IN PACE



Marriage Preparation Programs

Foundations for Marriage | 2026 | Catholic Engaged Encounter

Foundations for Marriage

Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
At various locations

January 17 | Flaget Center
1935 Lewiston Drive, Louisville

February 21 | St. Augustine Church
235 S. Spalding Avenue, Lebanon

April 18 | Flaget Center
1935 Lewiston Drive, Louisville

June 13 | St. Albert the Great Church
1395 Girard Avenue, Louisville

August 15 | St. Peter the Apostle Church
5431 Johnstown Road, Louisville

November 14 | Holy Trinity Church
501 Cherrywood Road, Louisville

December 12 | St. Joseph Church
310 W. Stephen Foster Avenue, Bardstown

Catholic Engaged Encounter

Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.
and Sunday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

At various locations

April 11-12 | St. Albert the Great Church
1395 Girard Avenue, Louisville

\$175/per couple, including meals
No refunds will be given for cancellations within thirty (30) days of the scheduled weekend date.

For more information, or to register, visit
www.louisville.engagedencounter.com
or scan the QR code below:

