

The ArchLou Deacon

DIACONAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF LOUISVILLE | MAY-JUNE 2026



From the Diaconal Director

Dear Friends, My Dear Companions on the Journey,

Recently, our diaconal community heard three key homilies: Archbishop Shelton's at the Chrism Mass and Diaconal Ordination, and Deacon Mark Kelley's on the Feast of Saint Mark the Evangelist.



During the Chrism Mass, Archbishop Shelton clearly illustrated Christ's self-emptying — kenosis — as a model for Christian life and ministry. He reminded deacons to embody the indispensable ministry to reveal the kingship of Christ the Servant and demonstrate his justice, mercy, and service by supporting their families and communities, especially the marginalized.

When preaching the diaconal ordination, Archbishop Shelton explained how indispensable the ministry of the deacon is for all clerics. If the ministry of the ordained is best to be all that God intends ministry to be, Archbishop Shelton explained to us that “every good priest and every good bishop must have the heart of a deacon and always live the service that the proclamation of the Gospel demands.”

At our April ongoing formation session, Deacon Mark highlighted the importance of ministry rooted in action rather than words. He urged us to act humbly, trust God with our worries, navigate the sometimes-chaotic nature of ministry, and share peace through love.

Actions over words. In view of the words and deeds of Christ, we must live out our faith actively rather than merely speaking about it. This active proclamation is seen as embodying the Gospel to every creature encountered.

Humility and casting worries. We must embrace humility and entrust our worries to God, serving with composed assurance instead of anxiousness.

Navigating ministry chaos. Drawing on the OODA loop — Observe, Orient, Decide, Act — which originated in military strategy, ministry should involve observing our environment, aligning ourselves spiritually with Christ, making intentional decisions, and taking action, even when faced with chaos.

Peace through love. Peace in ministry chaos comes from loving God, oneself, and others. A deacon's love should show through presence, prayer, and action — even amid challenging aspects of ministry.

Reflecting on the words of Archbishop Shelton and Deacon Mark, we are reminded that grace shapes our daily lives. Despite occasional chaos, everything we have is a gift from God, and gratitude is essential. The Church encourages us to use these gifts to serve the Lord and his people. May we remember each day to pause and give thanks: “Praise God from whom all blessings flow!” ✠

—F. DeKarlos Blackmon

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

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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

You have likely been informed in deanery meetings that Diaconal Ministry, together with the Chancellor's Office, is reviewing deacons' Safe Environment training and background check status. These requirements stem from the "Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People" (Dallas Charter), approved by the USCCB in 2002 and revised in 2018.



The local policies for preventing sexual abuse of children are outlined in the document "Restoring Trust: The Sexual Abuse Policies of the Archdiocese of Louisville." The current revision is available online. The policy establishes a code of conduct for all church personnel. It also requires regular training and background checks for clergy, educators, deacons, and any other Church personnel who regularly work with minors. The Code of Conduct is included as Appendix E of the Directory for the Ministry of Permanent Deacons of the Archdiocese of Louisville ("The Directory").

As stated in The Directory (pages 20-21), these policies apply to all deacons serving within the Archdiocese of Louisville, including retired deacons with faculties. Wives and widows of deacons are strongly recommended by this office to stay current with their training, even though it is not required, due to their involvement in ministry with minors.

Initial Safe Environment training must be completed in person at a workshop. Recurrent training can be completed either in person or through an online program provided by Catholic Mutual. Both the in-person and online recurrent training sessions take about two hours to complete.

Since 2021, Safe Environment training and background checks must be renewed every five years. This five-year renewal policy was introduced to ensure ongoing vigilance and up-to-date knowledge among all personnel working with minors. Background checks can be arranged through your parish office or by contacting

Ongoing Diaconal Formation

May 16, 2026

Anointing of the Sick and Pastoral Care

Flaget Retreat Center, 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

May 30, 2026

Mass with the Rite of Ordination of Priests

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

June 5-7, 2026

Annual Diaconal Community Retreat

Saint Meinrad Archabbey - Bede Hall

August 22, 2026

Day of Reflection: The Wife of a Deacon

Location To Be Determined

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

Mass Commemorating 75th Anniversary of Living Rosary

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

November 22, 2026

Deacon Gala

Location To Be Determined

our Office. After initiation, a background check typically takes three to five days to complete.

If you are unsure of your status, please contact your parish office; they are required to know the status of all their volunteers and clergy. Alternatively, reach out to the Chancery and they can verify status. For more information and a current schedule of Safe Environment Workshops visit www.archlou.org/safe.

As always, thank you for your ministry.

Deacon Mark

AVE MARIA

*Ave Maria, grátia plena,
Dóminus tecum.*

Mary is an exemplar of the three-fold ministry of Word, Liturgy, and Charity. Marian devotion shapes a Christian's life as a lasting testimony of faith, hope, and charity.

May has long been observed in Catholic tradition as the month dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, a devotion intended not to replace worship of Christ, but to lead believers more deeply to Him through Mary's intercession. Marian devotion in May encourages intensified prayer at times of special need for both the Church and the world. This custom developed as a way of offering Mary more fervent homage, with Pope Saint Paul VI teaching that such devotion brings spiritual benefit by opening people more fully to God's mercy through Mary's prayers.

Mary is an exemplar of the three-fold ministry of Word, Liturgy, and Charity. By allowing the mysteries to unfold through her, Mary's very response, "Be it done to me according to Your Word," at the Annunciation of the Lord is an illustration of her receptiveness to the Word. The charity of Mary is exemplified in her visit to Elizabeth, her relative. Mary's charity is exemplary of this very act of service by staying the few months until Elizabeth gave birth to John the Baptist. When Mary is sitting at the foot of the cross, she is modeling for us what it means to be at the service of the altar (liturgy), as she is spiritually united to Jesus in his sacrifice for the salvation of mankind.

Recognizing Mary's presence with us, as with the disciples at the foot of the cross and Pentecost, simple daily practices like praying the Rosary help embed Marian devotion into ordinary life, allowing the message of Easter to take root throughout the entire liturgical year. ✠

INQUIRY CLASS OF 2032

*Pray, discuss with wife,
and confer with pastor*

Deacon formation inquiry helps men determine if God is calling them to ministry as a servant of the liturgy, word, and charity.

As we encourage men to express interest in Diaconal Ministry in the Archdiocese of Louisville, we encourage you to keep a few points in mind.

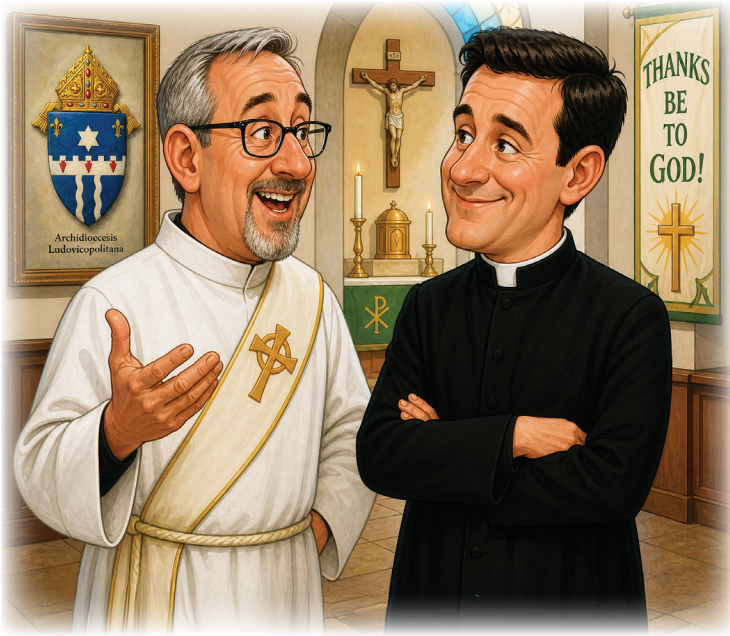
Archbishop Shelton reminds us that "deacons, as a sign of humility and embodying Christ the Servant, are called to pour themselves out in humble service to their wives, families, the pastors, and the faithful they serve." Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that the diaconal call is not away from the world, but rather into it—meaning active involvement in community life, serving those in need, and engaging in the challenges and realities of society.

This discernment process requires thoughtful reflection, as the responsibilities of diaconal ministry are integrated with commitment to one's wife and children. The response to a discerned call takes into account the needs of the family, ensuring that diaconal ministry strengthens the primary vocation within the home. Balancing the duties of husband and father with those of diaconal ministry is essential, as both vocations are interconnected and influences the spiritual and emotional health of the family.

The deacon, as a symbol of service, impacts the community through his dedication and the way he publicly responds in ministry. As a man of God, the deacon must also be a man of prayer and reflection, allowing his spiritual practices to guide his decisions and help him support others during challenging times.

For further information, contact the Office of Diaconal Ministry at diaconate@archlou.org. ✠

Practical Ways for Deacons to SUPPORT OUR PRIESTS



Deacon Jim Shields speaks on how deacons can help to address challenges, to foster well-being, and to make a positive difference in the life of a pastor.

At a recent event, a speaker from a mental health center in Philadelphia that specializes in treating mental health and substance abuse for clergy and religious, detailed the challenges that they see with their patients. He shared that the diocesan priests they serve suffer from high levels of depression, anxiety and addiction; he also commented that they often present in poor physical health. The presenter focused on the lifestyle that the typical diocesan priest lives, one that often includes constant stress, loneliness, feeling under-appreciated, poor diet, and little exercise and other self-care. When this lifestyle is paired with working long hours, not taking days off, administrative responsibilities for which they have little training, and difficulties setting healthy limits with parishioners who often have unrealistic expectations, the situation is ripe for the development of mental health and substance use problems.

The presenter then turned to how parishes can show support to our priests. Suggestions included the importance of parishioners being active volunteers on parish committees and organizations, being respectful of priests' time and time off, and getting tasks done around

the facilities. He shared a story of a pastor who had no fewer than 10 parishioners tell him after Mass that the light was out in the church restroom; not one of them asked where they could find a light bulb so they could change it for him.

The conversation then shifted to what deacons can do to support our priests. In addition to the general suggestions, it was discussed that deacons can offer support around liturgies. Priests are often approached by different people before a Mass starts with questions about music, choices in the readings, questions of communion, etc. As deacons, we can come to the church early and address some of these questions before Father arrives, and the questions that we can't answer ourselves, we can collect and ask the presider and then communicate back to the lay ministers.

Another area that a deacon has a unique opportunity to offer support to our priests is in communication around hot topics within the parish. Often, Father will hear complaints and criticisms about parish decisions and/or changes from a vocal minority while a supportive majority remains very quiet. This can easily lead to anxiety and frustration. As deacons, we often hear positive and supportive comments made by parishioners in passing that may never make it to our pastor. Offering up those comments to our priests may help to allay doubts and take some of the sting from the criticisms they endure.

Finally, as deacons, we can also use quiet times with our priests to check in on their emotional functioning. If they are open to it, we can process challenging decisions they have to make or problem solve with them about handling stressors coming up in the future. We can also encourage them to take off time, attend to their health, enjoy leisure activities, and maybe discuss the merits of professional services like spiritual direction and psychotherapy if necessary. Whether the priests we serve with open up to us or not, they will know that someone cares; and in the end, that might be exactly what Father needs the most. ✕



DEACON
JIM
SHIELDS

Winter of Disbelief & Springtime of the Gospel

Homily of Bishop Michael F. Olson of Fort Worth for the Opening Mass
of the National Association of Diaconate Directors Annual Meeting



Bishop Michael F. Olson explores the spiritual significance of winter as a metaphor for disbelief and hardship, drawing parallels to the life and martyrdom of Saint Stephen. Ultimately, his homily calls for authentic Christian witness and reminds the Church to be rooted in truth, charity, and faith, even in challenging times.

“It was winter.” These are the words we read in today’s Gospel as written by John the Evangelist. “It was winter.” It was a winter not so much of discontent but of disbelief. It was a winter of cold disbelief among those who saw the works of Jesus but refused to understand them. It was a winter of cold disbelief among those who heard the words spoken by Jesus but refused to listen to them or to recognize His voice. It was a winter of suspense and anxiety among those who waited for the Christ but would only recognize and accept Him on their own terms. “Tell us plainly.” It was winter.

Winter indicates a lifeless and cold season, awaiting the Spring of new life. It is a winter of disbelief among the listeners of Jesus who refuse to allow the seed of His works to be rooted in their lives. They refuse to recognize His voice as their shepherd because change is so frightening that it appears not to be in their personal interest, even the change from slavery to freedom, the change from sin to holiness, the change from death to

life. It takes faith to recognize Him as the Christ in His works and in His words. This faith is born at Pentecost and brings clear recognition and acceptance of the works of Christ in His death and Resurrection.

Saint Stephen was graced as a deacon with such faith that he could clearly recognize the eternal significance of the culminating work of Christ in His death and Resurrection. He could hear the voice of His Shepherd and follow it. The Acts of the Apostles record his martyrdom as fully configured to Christ’s death manifesting the configuration of his life to that of Christ who came not to be served but to serve.

Remember that Stephen was ordained and entrusted by the Apostles as a deacon to care for the Greek-speaking widows and orphans that they should be included in the charity that is essential to the Communion of the Church. Since most of these Greek-speaking Christians were also Jews they carried with them in their experience a past association with the conflict between the members of the Synagogue of Freedmen and others in mainline Jewish society.

The Synagogue of Freedmen consisted of Greek-speaking slaves of the Romans who had been liberated, became proselytes of Judaism, and had a synagogue in Jerusalem. They also consisted of people who had been born Jewish, enslaved by the Romans, and then set free. In any event, they were probably held suspect by larger elements of the Jewish community who distrusted all things foreign in an effort to maintain the purity of Temple worship and Jewish identity. So, the so-called Synagogue of Freedmen disrupted Jewish society and worship in a spirit of political activism.

We can be sure that this conflict among the Jews, Greek-speaking and Aramaic-speaking Jews, was exploited by the Romans and their surrogates for the purpose of maintaining power and control. We can be certain that Saul of Tarsus was right in the middle of that conflict and a beneficiary of this discord. We can

also be sure that Saul of Tarsus as a Pharisee was more than capable of presenting the conflict in theological language and argue with Stephen.

Yet, Stephen did not take the bait of argument. Having been configured to Christ, he exemplified the admonition of Jesus. “You will be given at that moment what you are to say. For it will not be you who speak but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.” Most clearly the Lord gave Stephen his own words spoken from the Cross for Stephen to utter at the supreme moment of teaching and witness in Stephen’s life and in that of the early Church: “Into your hands Lord, I commend my spirit.”

It is this same Saul of Tarsus who would be converted and for whom Barnabas, whose name means “son of encouragement,” would send to bring the Gospel to Jew and Gentile with its accompanying tranquility of order to the Church in Antioch where both Jew and Gentile would first and foremost be identified most truly as “Christians.”

Today, in our life as the Church and in broader society, it is winter. We see the same exploitation conducted against the poor and weak by the partisan activists on both sides of political life for financial and political purposes. The weakest among us, refugees, trafficking victims, crime victims, the unborn, and all in the margins, are used for political purposes outside and sadly inside the church but are cared for by nobody except Christ and those who are in authentic communion with Him. It is a hallmark of the culture of death and the tyranny of relativism to pit the weak against the poor in a struggle for survival when instead Christ would offer them freedom and authentic communion. Stephen’s life and martyrdom manifest clearly that deacons are to be at the forefront as advocates for the centrality of Christ in Christian life beginning with their own lives in heralding the Gospel for all people as ministers of charity.

Pope Benedict XVI reminded us in his first encyclical entitled, *Caritas in Veritate*, “Without truth, charity degenerates into sentimentality. Love becomes an empty shell, to be filled in an arbitrary way. In a culture

without truth, this is the fatal risk facing love. It falls prey to contingent subjective emotions and opinions, the word “love” is abused and distorted, to the point where it comes to mean the opposite...Charity goes beyond justice, because to love is to give, to offer what is “mine” to the other; but it never lacks justice, which prompts us to give the other what is “his,” what is due to him by reason of his being or his acting. I cannot “give” what is mine to the other, without first giving him what pertains to him in justice. If we love others with charity, then first of all we are just towards them. Not only is justice not extraneous to charity, not only is it not an alternative or parallel path to charity: justice is inseparable from charity.”



In many ways, it is winter today, but the springtime of the Gospel is always upon us wherever we live according to its teachings. It is the ministry of deacons as heralds of the Gospel that saves us from the winter of discouragement and disbelief through their authentic witness of charity fully revealed in Christ. The ministry of deacons helps us to overcome past ideological disputes because the Gospel of Christ is more powerful than any ideology. Our deacons must be reminded that they are first of all ministers of charity and not of sentimentality. Just as the blood of Stephen the Martyr was poured out to water the seeds of the Church in its springtime, we pray for our deacons that they might faithfully discharge their ministries even at the risk of social martyrdom. We approach the altar of Christ for His Sacrifice that configures all of us to His Body as His Church, that we might first always and everywhere be known as Christians. ✠



BISHOP
MICHAEL
OLSON

Happy Birthday

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

(Psalm 139:14)

MAY

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 6- Kathy Parker | 17- Alice Noltemeyer |
| 7- Karen Sheets-Mobley | 17- Craig Roberts |
| 8- Patty Korfhage | 19- Marcia Marks |
| 10- Keith McKenzie | 20- Ann Padgett |
| 11- Sheila King | 22- Donnie Robbins |
| 11- John Strain | 23- Teresa Nash |
| 12- Ann Hamilton | 25- Cathy McKenzie |
| 12- Dotty Lewis | 28- Gloria Dawson |
| 13- Booper Carney | 29- Therese Caruso |
| 14- Carmen Rendon | 30- Scott Hedges |
| 15- Joann Dugan | 31- Jack Koenig |
| 16- Joe Moore | 31- Mary Raibert |
| 17- Theresa Chathaparampil | |

JUNE

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 6- Therese Richerson | 19- Dean Sears |
| 7- Cherie Zoldak | 20- John Hamilton |
| 9- Shirley Beavin | 20- Melinda Lockett |
| 12- John Maher | 21- Rita Jenkins |
| 12- Toni Mullins | 22- Earl Baker |
| 13- Bonnie Dever | 25- John Fellonneau |
| 14- Mark Rougeux | 25- Don Masterson |
| 15- Thomas Roth | 27- Phil Noltemeyer |
| 16- Phil Hettich | 29- Jim Kramer |
| 16- Greg Klinglesmith | 29- Christopher McDonell |
| 17- Ted Marks | 29- Martha Stuber |
| 19- Jennifer Bush | |
| 19- Susie Heil | |



Archdiocese of Louisville Ministry Institute

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ALMI offers formation for lay ministry, including catechist certification. Please make use of this resource for formation in theology, scripture, and pastoral ministry through various modes of instruction to support parish leaders and volunteers. For more information visit <https://www.archlouff.org>.

Deacon Evrard Muhoza Presbyteral Ordination Saturday, May 30 | 11 a.m.

All deacons are invited to vest in stole and dalmatic for the ordination at the Cathedral of the Assumption. Deacons must bring their own albs and issued archdiocesan white stoles and dalmatics – no vestments will be available. Please respond to invitations, as a prompt RSVP ensures appropriate seating.

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.

Bob Kampschaefer	Friday, May 1, 2020	Helen Flowers	Friday, May 27, 2011	Catherine Craycroft	Tuesday, June 22, 1999
Joseph Wheatley	Saturday, May 3, 2008	Bill Skeeters	Tuesday, June 2, 2015	Pat Kampschaefer	Saturday, June 23, 2018
Judy Patterson	Monday, May 7, 2018	John Richard Whelan	Saturday, June 8, 2019	Lamar Fante	Sunday, June 25, 2006
Rose Amon	Thursday, May 8, 2008	William Thomas	Wednesday, June 9, 2010	Mary Kinsella	Saturday, June 25, 2022
Charlotte Mattingly	Friday, May 12, 2017	James Benton	Sunday, June 12, 2005	Bob Markert	Tuesday, June 25, 2024
David Kannapall	Sunday, May 16, 1993	Paul Bissig	Saturday, June 16, 2018	Joe Filiatreau	Monday, June 27, 2016
Carolyn Bissig	Wednesday, May 16, 2012	Mary Voll	Thursday, June 17, 2004	Tom Ryan	Thursday, June 28, 2012
Peter Houck	Tuesday, May 17, 2022	Ruth Ratterman	Sunday, June 17, 2007		
Jim Mitchell	Wednesday, May 21, 2003	Mary Hobb	Wednesday, June 17, 2015		
Rufus Young	Tuesday, May 21, 2013	Barb Brown	Tuesday, June 20, 2017		
Martha Kannapall	Tuesday, May 22, 2018	Gary Becker	Thursday, June 21, 2018		
Paul Arnold, Jr.	Saturday, May 24, 2003	Joseph Wiechert	Saturday, June 22, 2013		

