

THE *Belleville Deacon*

OFFICE OF VOCATIONS | DIACONATE FORMATION | DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE



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2018 Deacon Ordination Class

During the Litany of Saints, the candidate lies prostrate on the floor, which is a complete sign of humility; acknowledging his nothingness in the presence of God. It is then that the congregation begins to pray that the Holy Spirit will come down upon these men, and at the same time, invoking all of God's saints to pray for them.

Come and See

"The Gospel comes alive in our own day, whenever we accept the compelling witness of people whose lives have been changed by their encounter with Jesus." - Pope Francis

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Reverend Steven M. Pautler



We have completed two of our *Come and See* presentations and the response has been fantastic. Possible deacon aspirants, men in formation, ordained deacons, priests and wives of deacons have responded with open arms.

We have only two more scheduled events, and you are encouraged to attend if you are interested in what the permanent diaconate is all about. Looking forward to seeing you!

Cathedral of St. Peter

Saturday, October 15, 2022
10:00 a.m. (Undercroft)
200 W. Harrison Street
Belleville, IL 62220

St. Mary Parish

Wednesday, November 16, 2022
7:00 p.m. (Church)
1550 Main Street
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864

COPORAL WORKS OF MERCY "VISIT THOSE IN PRISON"

Deacon John Fridley



Deacons and Prison Ministry

Are you looking for a satisfying assignment after ordination or to fill a void in your present ministry? You might consider training for 'Prison Ministry.' After spending nearly a decade serving the men at Southwestern Illinois Correctional Center (SWICC) I can attest it is a humbling, fulfilling, and rewarding assignment. Humbling because for me, I often say, 'but for the grace of God...' (1 Cor 15:10-11). Fulfilling because the men are always looking to God as their redeemer and you bring organization to that quest. Rewarding, because you are the figure that brings a live person to address their questions, or just listen, interpret scripture, teach them to read scripture, and to pray with them and for them. For many, your presence exposes them and brings them into the true faith, through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) and the Universal Church. Trust me, you will not run out of things to do or challenges to meet in Prison Ministry.

I began my journey after talking with Bishop in Residence Stanley Schlarman, Fr Chris Reuter (deceased), and Mr. Lou Slapshak. At the time they were actively organizing a prisoner outreach program in East St. Louis. They were successful in establishing 'Our Brother's Keepers of Southern Illinois' (<https://obkministry.org>). Fr. Reuter, a Jesuit Priest, headed up the Belleville Diocese Prison Ministry program for many years before his passing in June 2018. He personally built a two-year training program and worked with Lewis University to bring it to fruition. The weekend program that I attended brought together deacons and lay people from every diocese in Illinois. His able assistant, Lou Slapshak walked with him as they represented the men and women incarcerated in Southern Illinois. You will not find many prisons North of Interstate 70. Just saying.

They organized, recruited, and trained prison ministers for the state and local jails to bring the 'Word' and 'Presence' of God to all who were incarcerated. To bring the Word that there was hope for their future and there were people outside the walls that did care and were willing to help. Anyone who would listen would get a complete education on prison ministry from Fr. Chris and Lou. They stressed how important it was for the incarcerated men and women, and how important it is for Christians to live the 'Corporal Works of Mercy' (To visit the imprisoned – Matt 25:31-36; CCC 2447).

This ministry is open to ordinary and lay ministers. You will never regret any time spent with the incarcerated. To inquire or for additional information, visit the Diocese of Belleville website at : <https://www.diobelle.org/dps/prison-ministry/prison-ministry>. Yours in service to our Lord.

Important Dates For Deacon Aspirants/Inquirers

Come and See

Saturday, October 15, 2022
Cathedral, Belleville, IL
10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Come and See

Wednesday, November 16, 2022
St. Mary, Mt. Vernon, IL
7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Deacon Aspirants Application Process Begins

Saturday, January 29, 2023
Diocesan Pastoral Center, Building #6
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 a.m.

Deadline for Aspirant Application

Diocesan Vocation Office
Saturday, March 4, 2023

Deacon Aspirant Candidates meet with Bishop McGovern

March 2023 - May 2023

For Deacon Candidates (in Formation) Class of 2023

Formation Session

October 14th – October 16th
Diocesan Pastoral Center, Building #6

Formation Session

November 11th – November 13th
Diocesan Pastoral Center, Building #6

Installation: Ministry of Acolyte

Saturday November 12th
Cathedral of St. Peter – 10:00 a.m.

Formation Session

December 9th – December 11th
Diocesan Pastoral Center, Building #6

Canonical Retreat

Monday, April 24th – Friday, April 28th, 2023
Toddhall Retreat Center, Columbia, IL

Ordination to the Sacred Order of Deacons

Saturday, June 3rd, 2023
Cathedral of St. Peter, Belleville, IL
10:30 a.m.

For Ordained Deacons

Deacon Retreat with Spouses

October 2nd – October 4th
St. Meinrad Archabbey

Continuing Education/Formation with Bishop McGovern

October 23, 2022
Cathedral of St. Peter - Undercroft

Suggested Reading List

Director of Worship, Father Godfrey Mullen, OSB has shared a book that he came across years ago. He said, "It is probably one of the best pieces I've ever seen on the diaconate."

It is out of print but the PDF version can be used as a study guide.

Thanks Father Godfrey for sharing.

<https://www.diobelle.org/canonical-affairs/deacon-formation>

Service Ministry of the Deacon

— STUDY COPY —
Bishop's Committee on the Permanent Diaconate
National Conference of Catholic Bishops
Study Copy used with permission of the author
Reverend Timothy J. Shugrue

This book is out of print but you can view the study version at:
<https://www.diobelle.org/canonical-affairs/deacon-formation>

WAITING IN THE PEW

Dawn Helfrich, wife of Deacon Thomas J. Helfrich



What is the role of the Deacon's Wife in Church Ministry.

The role and responsibilities of the ordained Deacon has been well defined within the Catholic Church while still allowing each Deacon the flexibility to form his own individual ministry using his personal skill set, talents and interests. However, there are no clear guidelines or role expectations for the wives of Deacons. While this ambiguity can allow each wife to choose her own personal path, there is the potential for wives of Deacons to feel uncertain about where she fits into Church ministry.

In its most basic definition ministry is in service to others. Most would agree that all Christian wives are serving a ministry by living their best life as a Christian wife and mother, even more evident for the wives of Deacons. A man is called to the diaconate and enters formation with his wife's support. The couple enters formation together. The unique perspective of a female voice can be an underrated benefit to her husband's ministry.

The calling for wives is not so clear or loud. Many wives support their husband's formation, ordination and subsequent ministry but want to find their own contribution. Often this means doing activities. These activities may not necessarily be what they are passionate about but where there is a need.

One Sunday morning not long after Tom's ordination, I was sitting alone in the front pew. An older gentleman walked past and whispered "Aren't you lonely sitting here by yourself?" He made me smile but also reminded me that the congregation is watching me. How do I minister and serve others when I leave that pew?

What is my ministry calling?

One vital truth I discovered is that sitting in that pew is by itself an important ministry. Blessed Mother Teresa, perhaps one of the greatest missionaries to walk this Earth, stated, "Christ prays in me. Christ works in me. Christ thinks in me. Christ looks through my eyes. Christ speaks through my words. Christ works with my hands. Christ walks with my feet. Christ loves with my heart."

All these years I have been too focused perhaps, on doing rather than being. I thought my value was measured by the tangible things people saw me doing. I have finally given myself permission to slow down and just be. Be the prayer the Church needs, be the wife my husband deserves, be me. Giving myself these permissions has brought me deeper and more meaningful faith. Of course doing is not bad either. While most of us cannot give with the tenacity of Mother Teresa, we still want to do more.

There is no cookie cutter version of the perfect Deacon's wife. She is a gift to the Church because of her unique individuality and gifts. Finding your ministry calling is challenging. Here are a few suggestions that may help.

- Discover your passion. Do what you love and fits into your lifestyle. Sometimes this means saying no.
- Try new things. Fear of failure holds us back too many times. Initially I was afraid to write this article. Scripture helped me have the courage and faith to say yes. "At all times bless the Lord, your God, and ask him that all your paths may be straight and

all your endeavors and plans may prosper."

- Continue your own education. This can be informal or taking advanced college classes. There are many Theology degrees open to women and more women are filling Lay Ministry roles.
- Be patient with yourself. Opportunities tend to present themselves.
- Discuss your thoughts with your husband. Make sure he knows you are not asking him for solutions.
- Pray! Invite God into your discernment.

Each of us is a ministry in action. Our ministry evolves over time. Alexander Men, an Orthodox Priest and Martyr, stated before his death, "Don't worry about me. I am only an instrument that God is using for the moment. Afterwards, things will be as God wants them." And don't forget that waiting in the pew speaks volumes.

MESSAGE FROM THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Reverend Michaelsami Arockiam



I was glad to be there at St. Francis Xavier Church, Carbondale on September 13 and to meet with more than seven potential candidates willing to serve our Diocese of Belleville as Deacons. Most of them were from St. Andrew, Murphysboro. Thanks to Father Joel Seipp who sowed the seeds in their hearts.

I observed in the enthusiasm of the candidates and of their wives what St. John says in his first letter (2:18): "our love [for God and neighbor] is not to be just words or mere talk but something real and active" Therefore what God did was that He opened the hearts of these candidates and of their wives to think about working more zealously for His Church. These candidates recognized that their love for God and His Church should take a concrete expression in their lives.

Father Pautler's talk and invitation and the sharing from the Deacons present were very helpful and encouraging to the candidates. I hope and pray that the Lord God continues to work in them, removes all hindrances and hesitations, and makes it possible for them to respond generously to His call to serve with love.

MESSAGE FROM THE ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Mrs. Patti Warner



It has been a real joy to meet new people as our teams travel around the diocese for Come and See meetings. The diaconate is a growing ministry. When the Class of 2023 is ordained next year, the Diocese of Belleville will actually have more deacons than we do active priests! There will be many opportunities for deacons to make meaningful contributions to parishes throughout the diocese, and to do so for many years to come.

I suspect that Cardinal Richard Cushing had his tongue in cheek when he said in the 1960s, "The bishops will govern the Church, the priests will do all the work, and the deacons will have all the fun," but, who knows? Maybe he was right! If the idea of being a deacon is in your mind and heart at all, it is worth your time to "Come and See."