

THE *Belleville Deacon*

OFFICE OF VOCATIONS | DIACONATE FORMATION | DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE

Welcome aspirants and wives to Deacon Formation



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Tom Braun (Betsy Amoroso)
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James Burris (Chelsea)
St. Mary, Centralia

Jeffrey Craig (Jennifer)
St. Andrew, Murphysboro

Nathan Higginson (Carrie)
SS. Peter & Paul, Waterloo

Douglas Kuhl (Cynthia)
St. Dominic, Breese

Matthew Lees (Angela)
St. Joseph, Marion

Andy Orlet (Cheryl)
Holy Childhood, Mascoutah

William Rebholz (Judith)
SS. Peter & Paul, Waterloo

Timothy Taylor (Joan)
SIU-C Newman Center, Carbondale

Gary Zwilling (Dorothy)
St. Joseph, Stringtown

Diocese of Springfield-Cape

Brian Bauknecht (Barbara)
Immaculate Conception - Jackson

Robert (Bob) Janota (Lori)
St. Vincent - Cape Girardeau

Jimmy McCleary (Holly)
Sacred Heart - Mountain Grove

Bradley Stroder (Emily)
St. William - Buffalo

Joshua (Ron) Yates (Linda)
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton - Springfield



DIRECTOR'S REPORT.

Reverend Steven M. Pautler

It is with profound joy and gratitude that I warmly welcome the men and their wives as they embark on their significant journey towards the diaconate in service to our Lord and His Church. The ministry of the diaconate, deeply rooted in the traditions of the early Church, stands as a testament to Christ's call to service. By answering this call, they have chosen a path marked by profound commitment, leadership, and service.

Their progression towards the role of deacon will be characterized by spiritual growth, self-discovery, and a deepening faith. As the Director of Deacon Formation, I am privileged and obligated to guide, mentor, and accompany them throughout this pivotal period. Our program is designed to furnish them with the theological understanding, pastoral capabilities, and spiritual strength required to undertake this sacred ministry.

Over the past year, they have initiated their formal discernment. While this process is extensive and rigorous, with God's grace, it promises to be a journey of spiritual enlightenment. This path, though not without its challenges, will be enriched by moments of grace, camaraderie, and a strengthening bond with Christ.

I kindly request that you keep the Aspirants from our Diocese and the Diocese of Springfield-Cape in your prayers."

NOW HIRING AN ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT FOR VOCATIONS AND DEACON FORMATION

We are seeking a part-time (24 hours per week) Administrative Assistant for the Office of Vocations and Deacon Formation. The administrative assistant, under the direction of the Vocations Director, manages incoming calls, coordinates events that promote vocations, and prepares and maintains reports, records, and files. This position, under the direction of the Permanent Deacon Formation Director, organizes and coordinates deacon formation weekends, including facilitating classroom instructors, scheduling meetings, arranging caterers and meals, arranging accommodations, developing schedules, preparing worship aids, procuring textbooks, arranging Mass, and providing Deacon aspirants with assistance related to their attendance at deacon formation classes. The administrative assistant is the onsite liaison during the monthly deacon formation weekends. Essential qualifications include a minimum of a high school diploma, Associate's Degree preferred, or equivalent experience; and 1-3 years' experience in a related role of providing administrative/clerical support, plus knowledge in Microsoft Office and other computer programs/applications. Practicing Catholic required with thorough knowledge and understanding of Catholic teachings, practices, and organizational structure. **TO APPLY: Send resumé, cover letter, and references to Human Resources, Diocese of Belleville, 222 South Third Street, Belleville, IL 62220 or email humanresources@diobelle.org.**

Application Deadline: September 5, 2023

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Important Dates

Deacon Formation for the Class of 2028

Weekend Session

Saturday, September 9, 2023
Cathedral of St. Peter (Undercroft)
8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Weekend Session

Saturday, October 14, 2023
Cathedral of St. Peter (Undercroft)
Time (TBD)

Weekend Session

Saturday, November 11, 2023
Cathedral of St. Peter (Undercroft)
Time (TBD)

Weekend Session

Saturday, December 9, 2023
Cathedral of St. Peter (Undercroft)
Time (TBD)

Weekend Session

Saturday, January 13, 2024
Cathedral of St. Peter (Undercroft)
Time (TBD)

Important Information for All Permanent Deacons

Annual Deacon Retreat
Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows
Deacons & Spouses
September 8th - 10th

Deacons quarterly meeting with
Bishop McGovern
October 8, 2023 - 1:30 p.m.
Cathedral Undercroft

A CALL TO DEACONS, PLEASE CONSIDER PRISON MINISTRY

This is a request to all deacons to consider prison ministry within our diocese. Many of us have been asked to step-up and assume ministry that we may not be comfortable with. The ministry of deacon is desperately needed in our many State Prisons located in Southern Illinois.

Deacons who venture into prison ministry primarily offer a ministry of presence. By simply being there, by listening, by accompanying the incarcerated during their darkest hours, deacons become Christ's hands and feet on Earth. They provide a listening ear, spiritual guidance, and, often, the sacraments to those behind bars. They bring the Word of God and Jesus, through the Sacrament of Eucharist.

Many inmates have found solace, transformation, and even vocational callings through the interventions of deacons in prison ministry. Stories abound of hardened criminals encountering the merciful face of Christ through the compassionate presence of a deacon, leading them on paths of repentance and renewal.

Our involvement stands as a testament to the Church's unwavering commitment to uphold the dignity of every human life, regardless of past mistakes. It's a poignant reminder that redemption is available for all and that no one is beyond the reach of God's grace.

In conclusion, the involvement of Catholic deacons in prison ministry is not just an act of service but a profound testament to the Gospel's transformative power.

MESSAGE FROM THE COORDINATOR OF DEACONS.



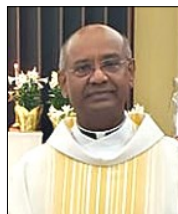
Deacon Thomas and Dawn Helfrich

Welcome back to The Belleville Deacon, Dawn and I are going to continue to share with you our journey to and in the diaconate in the coming issues. A lot has happened with the new aspirants since our last article and we are so happy to welcome you into diaconate formation. You will find it a challenging, thought provoking, faith filled journey of continued discernment that we pray will lead to where you are being called to follow the Lord and serve the Church.

In our last article we discussed the importance of getting to know the men and women who are on this journey with you and now you have had the opportunity to do that on your Aspirant Retreat and will have more opportunities to get to know each other in the coming months. As the monthly Saturday aspirant gatherings begin in September you will begin to know, respect, support, and be supported by these men and their wives. Please know that you are also being supported by the deacon formation team, the ordained clergy, your individual parishes, the deacon community, the diocese, and so many others in your formation and discernment. As you begin your aspirancy, don't overthink it, enjoy these gatherings, soak them in, learn from them, and let them help and guide your discernment. Learn from the presenters and the men and women with you on this journey.

You are not on this journey alone and if you need assistance, please reach out to any of us on the deacon formation team. If I can help in any way contact me, and if the wives... have questions, need help, or just want to chat, they can contact Dawn at 618.334.0261. God bless you and know that you are in your prayers.

MESSAGE FROM THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR.



Reverend Michaelsami Arockiam

The Deacon Candidates, the class of 2028, will gather together on Saturday, September 9, 2023 for a day of discernment. This gathering marks the beginning of their formation and particularly the year of Aspirancy (2023-2024). Deacon Dan Lowery will give lectures and guide them through the discernment process that they become sure of their vocation to the Diaconate ministry in the Church.

I am personally looking forward to receive them and their wives, and spend the day with them. The Risen Lord encountered Paul the Pharisee on his way to Damascus. After receiving baptism at the hands of Ananias, Paul the Christian was sure that God revealed His Son in him and called to preach the Good News about the Son to the Gentiles (Gal.1:16-17). Paul did not go up to Jerusalem to meet the Apostles of our Lord but went off to Arabia probably to take time to discern and perceive more clearly, understand and accept the vocation to the Apostleship. He returned to Damascus as an Apostle.

I wish that the year of Aspirancy helps the candidates to discern and accept their vocation. I pray that the candidates are sure of their vocation as "the right thing" to do in the sight of God at this stage in their lives. God bless. Fr. Michael.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION A VITAL PART OF DEACON SPIRITUALITY.

Reverend Steven M Pautler

Spiritual direction, often described as the journey of discovering and discerning God's will, has a long-standing tradition within the Catholic Church. For those in ordained ministry, including deacons, this personal, soul-enriching experience becomes a means not only for our spiritual development but also to enhance our ability to serve the Church and its followers.

Spiritual direction offers deacons an opportunity to grow closer to God, to understand His call more deeply, and to navigate the challenges and opportunities of our vocation.

Not every spiritual director is suitable for a deacon. It's essential to find someone who understands the diaconal vocation and can provide guidance based on the Church's teachings. Recommendations from other priests and deacons is helpful.

For a Catholic deacon, spiritual direction isn't merely a recommendation but a vital component of our vocation. As we continue to serve the Church and its faithful, this guidance ensures that we remain rooted in our faith, continuously grow in our relationship with God, and effectively fulfill our sacred duties.

HIT THE GROUND RUNNING... A REFLECTION FROM A NEWLY ORDAINED DEACON.



Deacon Len & Tami Ratajczyk

Since my ordination, several experiences stand out. I cherish the moments when I conduct communion services for parishioners in assisted living communities. It warms my heart when someone tells me how my words during a homily profoundly impacted them. There have been times when families have sought blessings during their challenging times, and it's always a joy to share in the special occasion of a child's baptism with a family.

In terms of challenges, the complexity of questions about Church teachings has certainly increased. There are moments when I'm unsure of an answer and must admit it, promising to return with clarity. Moreover, mastering time management is an ongoing process, and having to decline requests can sometimes be tough.

Outside of my church role, I work at Scott AFB. Some from the base community recognize me from my services at Mass. This recognition provides a unique opportunity for engaging in enriching faith discussions, even during my professional hours. Recently, I assumed a new position that is more service-oriented, and I feel my Deacon vocation played a significant role in guiding my decision through prayer and discernment.

CALLING MEN FOR THE DEACON CLASS OF 2030 TO BEGIN IN JANUARY 2024.

For those interested, we are considering opening applications for the Aspirancy Class that is tentatively scheduled to start in September 2025. This January, we'll host a "Come and See" presentation for interested men and their wives (details on location and time will be provided later). If you're thinking about becoming a deacon, please reach out to your pastor. It's never too early to explore a vocation, and your pastor can guide you through the decision-making process.