

THE *Belleville Deacon*

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"The Belleville Deacon" is published electronically (monthly) by the Office of Permanent Deacon Formation, Diocese of Belleville, 222 South Third Street, Belleville, IL 62220



On Saturday, December 9, 2023, the Cathedral Undercroft witnessed a heartwarming assembly as members of the Belleville Deacon community came together with the Aspirant Class of 2028, their wives, and other invited guests. The event, marked by a sense of camaraderie and fellowship, was not just an ordinary gathering but a significant moment of social bonding and spiritual connection.

The afternoon was highlighted by a delicious meal, masterfully prepared by Betty Ann's of Mascoutah, which added a delightful culinary dimension to the gathering. During this brief but memorable gathering, the attendees engaged in a variety of activities that strengthened their bonds. They dedicated time to prayer, a practice central to the Deacon community, reaffirming

their shared faith and commitment. This spiritual element was a vital aspect of the day, bringing everyone closer in a shared expression of their beliefs.

The atmosphere was further enlivened by the sharing of stories, where laughter resonated through the Cathedral Undercroft. These stories, ranging from personal experiences to insightful anecdotes, highlighted the diverse backgrounds and rich experiences of those in the Deacon community. However, the gathering was brief, as it was a formation weekend for the Aspirants. These future deacons had to return to their studies, a reminder of their ongoing journey towards spiritual and community leadership. In essence, this gathering was a microcosm of the larger Deacon community - a blend of faith, fellowship, learning, and laughter. It was a testament to the strength and vibrancy of the Belleville Deacon community, and a beautiful example of how shared beliefs and goals can bring people together in meaningful and memorable ways.



The Diocese of Belleville is hosting an informational meeting for men and their spouses interested in becoming Permanent Deacons. This meeting will take place on Saturday, February 3, 2024, at the Cathedral of St. Peter, 200 W. Harrison Street, Belleville, IL 62220.

The Office of Permanent Deacon is considering starting a new class of aspirants in fall 2025. Eligibility is extended to men aged thirty-three to fifty-six by September 2025. *Men older than fifty-six may still apply but require special approval from the Deacon Formation Office and the Bishop.*

The formation process is a five-year commitment, including academic studies conducted by St. Meinrad School of Theology, spiritual direction, and learning about the deacon's role. Participants are required to attend a three-day meeting once per month over the course of the five year program. Interested individuals should first discuss their interest with their pastor. For those unable to attend the initial meeting, another session will be scheduled later. This meeting is an opportunity to learn about the process and requirements for becoming a Permanent Deacon in the Diocese.

The Office of Permanent Deacon Formation is seeking priests who are willing to serve as mentors/spiritual moderators for Aspirants and Deacons. Those interested are asked to email Reverend Steven Pautler spautler@diobelle.org. Thank you for your interest.

We are seeking a part-time (24 hours per week) Administrative Assistant for the Office of Vocations and Deacon Formation. 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.

Important Dates

Deacon Formation for the Class of 2028

Aspirancy Session

Prayer & Sacramental Participation

Deacon Ron Pirau

Saturday, January 13, 2024

Cathedral of St. Peter (Undercroft)

Time 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Aspirancy Session

Evangelization & Ecumenism

Mr. Robert Rivers

Saturday, February 10, 2024

Cathedral of St. Peter (Undercroft)

Time 8:30 - ?

Aspirancy Session

Research & Writing in Formation

Mr. Robert Rivers

Saturday, March 9, 2024

Cathedral of St. Peter (Undercroft)

Time 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Aspirancy Formation Weekend Philosophy I

Deacon Dan Lowery

Friday April 12th - Sunday April 14

Cathedral of St. Peter (Undercroft)

Friday 6:30 p.m. - Sunday 12:00 p.m.

Aspirancy Formation Weekend Philosophy II

Deacon Dan Lowery

Friday May 10th - Sunday May 12th

Cathedral of St. Peter (Undercroft)

Friday 6:30 p.m. - Sunday 12:00 p.m.

End of term vote and evaluations
and recommendation for advancement
scheduling begins in February 2024.

Deacon Formation Class of 2028

Retreat - (August) TBD

**Aspirants please remember you
can find course syllabus, agenda, re-
quired books, and other information at
St. Meinrad's Student Portal...
BLACKBAUD**

Important Dates

Belleville Deacon Community

Annual retreat

September 6 - 8, 2024

Kings House at the Shrine

Meeting with Bishop McGovern (Deacons only)

October 27, 2024 1:30 - 3:30

Cathedral Undercroft



Deacon Ron Pirau St. Meinrad Director of Deacon Formation, is January presenter.

On January 13, 2024, Deacon Ron will lead a presentation on prayer and sacramental participation. This event will be an ideal occasion to ask any questions you might have for Deacon Ron. .

MESSAGE FROM THE COORDINATOR OF DEACONS

Deacon Thomas and Dawn Helfrich



Have you heard of NDICE? It is the National Diaconate Institute for Continuing Education. This is an organization that you should be familiar with, especially permanent Deacons but also those considering or in formation for the diaconate. NDICE hosts an annual conference for all Deacons from across the country and it is a great way to help with your annual continuing education requirements (permanent Deacons) as well as network, socialize, and learn from experiences of other Deacons. The purposes of NDICE is:

- to promote the continuing education of Deacons;
- to promote ministry in the context of the cultural pluralism of the 21st century America and the Universal Church, that all people might know Christ;
- to further the Theological, Spiritual, and Pastoral growth and understanding of Diaconal Ministries through an Annual Conference; and,
- to promote and encourage the development of new Diaconal Ministries by providing an atmosphere in which Deacons and others from throughout the world might share their experiences of Christ and His Church.

NDICE publishes a newsletter every month or so. Deacons from the Belleville Diocese have been actively involved in and supporting NDICE for many many years, especially post covid when we hosted the annual conference at Holy Trinity Parish in our diocese in 2022, 2023, and will again host it in 2024. We are blessed to have Deacons who give of their time and talent to help lead the organization: President/Editor Dcn. Corby Valentine, Secretary Dcn. Wayne Weiler, Treasurer Dcn. John Hempen, and Managing Editor Dcn. Gerry Bach.

More information about NDICE and the monthly newsletter can be found on their website www.ndice.net and keep an eye out for more information on the 2024 conference at Holy Trinity July 22 - 25, theme - Being the Eucharist for All.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Reverend Steven M. Pautler



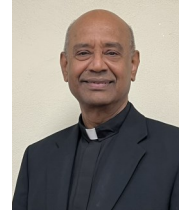
Merry Christmas! It's amazing how swiftly this holy season arrives each year, often catching us off guard in its rapid approach. I sincerely hope that each of you enjoyed a splendid Christmas, surrounded by the warmth and joy of family, friends, and your parish community.

Just a few days ago, in the midst of this festive bustle, I had an important reminder of the ever-moving nature of our liturgical calendar. My Director of Religious Education paid a visit to my office with a matter of timely importance. With a gentle urgency in her voice, she said, **'Father, we need to plan for Lent and the Triduum!'** This statement served as a poignant reminder that even in the midst of celebration, we must always look forward and prepare for the spiritual journeys ahead. It's a cycle of continual renewal and preparation that defines the rhythm of our faith life.

I would like to take a moment to provide some important clarifications regarding our upcoming initiatives. Firstly, as mentioned on the first page, we are organizing an informational meeting specifically for those men, along with their wives, who are contem-

MESSAGE FROM THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Reverend Michaelsami Arockiam



Greetings in the Lord!

**I wish you all a Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year!**

We, endowed with soul and body, would like to see with bodily eyes what we believe and love in our souls. Perhaps, this is the reason why world religions invented idolatry. Whereas we, guided by St. Francis, see and are reminded of in the nativity scene the Son of God who became human to love us.

Since ancient Greek philosophy the idea that "God be loved" guided the explanation for the birth of the Son of God in human nature: God sent His Son into the world in order to have at least one outside of His divine nature to love Him, with love worthy of Him and thus fulfil His first commandment. And Jesus, the Son in the human nature, loved God with love worthy of God - that perfect love which God was looking for or demanding from the humans. This explanation attributes to God "selfishness."

Our Scripture offers the explanation that is conclusive: The Divine God always loved humans with "eternal love" and revealed it to them. But humans never understood the depth of His love and never responded to it. Therefore, He willed His Son to become human to love humanity (and creation) with a love worthy of His divinity. He sent His only Son; the Word became flesh (Jn.1:14) - a man (Jn.8:40). Being a man, He loves us with the same depth of love, worthy of His Father. It is not that God was looking forward to a man paying him back the love worthy of His divinity but rather He wanted to love us by becoming and being a man like one of us and loving us with love that is worthy of His Father's divinity.

In the incarnation of His Son, a man, we see the love, worthy of God, lavished on us (1Jn.3:1). Now God's own love has become tangible calling us to love Him worthily. Again, A Happy and Prosperous New Year! God bless.

plating joining the Permanent Deacon Formation Class. This session aims to be concise, lasting under an hour, and will include a segment for addressing any questions attendees may have.

Secondly, for those who have previously applied but withdrew their application due to personal reasons, there is an opportunity to reapply, provided they fulfill the necessary requirements. However, I must note that there are a few individuals who do not meet the age criteria. For those in this category, it is essential to discuss your situation with the Director of Deacon Formation. He will be responsible for forwarding your request to Bishop McGovern for further consideration.

Thirdly, this event also serves as an inquiry session to gauge interest among qualified candidates for potentially forming a class in 2025. The decision to proceed will be based on the information and interest gathered, with a final decision expected by the end of 2024. This timeline provides ample opportunity for both you and the vocation office to thoroughly explore the feasibility of initiating this class.

Lastly, for those unable to attend the meeting in February, please be assured that there will be an additional meeting scheduled. The details of this subsequent session will be announced shortly, ensuring that everyone interested has the opportunity to participate and receive the necessary information.