

THE *Belleville Deacon*

OFFICE OF VOCATIONS | DIACONATE FORMATION | DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE



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Candidates please remember you can find course syllabus, agenda, required books, and other information at St. Meinrad's Student Portal... BLACKBAUD

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Faith, Fellowship, and Festive Cheer: Deacon Candidates Celebrate Christmas in the Cathedral Undercroft

The Deacon Candidates Class of 2028, joined by ordained deacons, Bishop McGovern, priests, and staff, gathered for a joyous Christmas celebration in the Undercroft of the Cathedral of St. Peter Saturday, December 14, 2024. This festive event was filled with the warmth of fellowship, the delight of delicious food, and the beauty of community as everyone came together to prepare their hearts for the Christmas season.

The space was alive with laughter and conversation as attendees shared stories, strengthened bonds, and reflected on the significance of the season. Adding to the joyful atmosphere, the musicians from the Sunday Cathedral 5:00 p.m.

Mass filled the Undercroft with beautiful Christmas music. Their melodies brought a touch of magic to the evening, uplifting spirits and reminding everyone of the hope and joy that Christ brings.

Bishop McGovern's presence made the celebration even more meaningful, as he shared his encouragement and blessings with the deacon candidates and all present. The event was a special opportunity for the candidates to connect with the ordained deacons and priests, fostering mentorship and community in their shared journey of service to the Church.

A special thanks goes out to the musicians for their outstanding contributions, as their music enriched the evening and made it unforgettable. It was truly a joyful and meaningful way to prepare for the celebration of Christ's birth!



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF DEACON FORMATION.

Reverend Steven Pautler

It is with joy and hope that I greet you as we enter the Holy Year 2025. Pope Francis has chosen the theme, "Pilgrims of Hope," for this jubilee year—a powerful reminder that we, as faithful servants, are called to journey together in faith, service, and the radiant hope of Christ. This special time invites us to open our hearts to God's grace, to reflect deeply on our commitment to the diaconate, and to walk steadfastly in the light of the Gospel. As deacon candidates and all deacons, you play a

vital role in nurturing hope within our communities. I encourage each of you to embrace the rich opportunities for growth and formation available in the coming year—whether through study, fellowship, or hands-on service.

Let the theme of "Pilgrims of Hope" shape your entire formation experience, inspiring you to share compassion, mercy, and the joy of the Good News with everyone you encounter.

May the year 2025 be a time of abundant blessings, guided by the Holy Spirit and strengthened by our service. With hearts alive in faith, let us walk together, fully participating in our call to ministry. You remain in my prayers, and I look forward to traveling alongside you, one hopeful step at a time, throughout this jubilee year.



MESSAGE FROM THE COORDINATOR OF DEACONS

Deacon Tom and Dawn Helfrich

Just a quick note about some world wide Catholic Church matters. In late 2024 two (not insignificant) documents came out of the Vatican. One was Pope Francis' latest Encyclical Letter DILEXIT NOS OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS ON THE HUMAN AND DIVINE LOVE OF THE HEART OF JESUS CHRIST.

The QR code to the right will take you to this document. The other document was the XVI ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS, For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission Final Document. It was issued after the second session of the Synod in the Vatican in October 2024. According to Pope Francis, the document gathers the fruits of a journey marked by listening to the People of God and by the discernment of Pastors. You may recall Bishop Michael McGovern opened the world-wide Synod process in the Diocese of Belleville on Oct. 17, 2021. This followed several months of an introduction to Synodality and a call for frequent prayer to the Holy Spirit, asking the Spirit's assistance in the process. Over the course of months, the People of God in southern Illinois participated in the Synod in a variety of ways, including parish gatherings, gatherings in religious communities, and Online participation. The QR code at the left will take you to the Final Document that is essentially the culmination, or fruits, of the world wide Synod 2021 2024 efforts.



MESSAGE FROM THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Rev. Michaelsami Arockiam

First and foremost, I wish you all a Happy New Year – a year of God's abundant blessings. And I pray that the Good Shepherd blesses you and your family in this new year 2025 and brings you to see him in yourself, in your family and in your neighbors.

As we all know our Holy Father Pope Francis has announced 2025 as the Ordinary Jubilee Year (December 24, 2024 - January 6, 2026) as we are celebrating the 2,025th anniversary of our Lord's incarnation. The Holy Father has chosen the theme: "Pilgrims of Hope." We are the pilgrims of hope. Pilgrims have the hope of reaching a destination; without this hope, there is no pilgrimage. Walking with Jesus, the way, the truth and the life (Jn. 14:6), we are certain to reach "a new heaven and a new earth" (2Peter 3:13). This Christian hope is given to us at Baptism and is strengthened by other sacraments as we travel. That is why we are the pilgrims of hope always even in the worst situation. The Holy Father invites us in this Jubilee Year "to fan the flame of hope and help everyone...to look to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart ... and thus, to restoring the climate of

Ordained Deacons & Wives Contact: Martina (722-5043)

Date	Day	Seminar Topic	Presenter
Sep-24	14th	Belleville Church History	Msgr. Flach
Oct-24	12th	Springfield - Cape Church History	Dn. Vaughn
Nov-24	9th	Intro to the Lectionary and Ordo	Fr. Godfrey
Dec-24	14th	Candidates & Deacon's Gathering	TBD
Jan-25	11th	Intro to the Roman Missal	Fr. Godfrey
Feb-25	15th	Prison Ministry	Dn. David Mills
Mar-25	15th	Ministry to the Sick & Aged	Fr. Neff
Apr-25	12th	Intro to the Deacon at the Mass	Fr. Godfrey
May-25	10th	Deacon & Proclamation of the Word	Msgr. Myler
Jun-25	14th	Deacon & Leading Marian Devotion	Msgr. Myler

hope" in this world of ours for all..." In this year, let us endeavor individually and as a community "to fan the fire of hope" by participating both in our Diocesan events and the events organized by the Holy See. With our active participation, this Jubilee year is going to be an "event of great, ecclesial and social significance in the life of the Church" (USCCB letter).

Also, I want you to reflect about our Heavenly Father's "hope" in all of us: He accepts us as His sons and daughters at Baptism, nurtures us in Holy Communion and forgives us in our confessions "to the praise of His glorious grace" (Eph.1:6). All these He does always with His hope that one day we will truly love Him in the same way He loves us. It is a matter of fulfilling His first commandment. Our God the Father is the God of hope: He has greater hope in us than we have in ourselves. That is the reason why His Eternal Son took flesh and lives among us in the tabernacles all over the world as the way, the truth and the life. And let us fulfill the hope of Him who expresses His Hope through His Son and through the mission of the Holy Spirit. Let His hope fan the fire of "our desire to love Him" in this Jubilee Year.

Again, a Happy New Year to all of you! God bless. Father Michael.

Save the Dates: Key Events for Deacons in 2025

Formation Meetings with Bishop McGovern (Deacons only)

Attire: (grey shirt, vest, rabat, etc.)

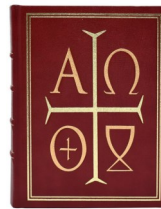
March 30, 2025, at 1:30 PM

October 19, 2025, at 1:30 PM

Location: Cathedral Undercroft

Annual Retreat for Deacons and their Spouses

September 26-28, 2025



Father Godfrey, "Intro to the Roman Missal", seminar Saturday, January 11th. 1pm - 3pm

Are you familiar with what each ribbon and tab represents in the Roman Missal, where you find prayers and readings of the day? Join Fr. Godfrey as he begins to explore the Roman Missal. Deacons and wives are welcomed to attend.

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR SEMINARIANS AND DEACON ASPIRANTS		
SEMINARIANS	DEACON ASPIRANTS - BELLEVILLE/SPRINGFIELD CAPE	
Deacon Levi James	Tom Braun & Betsy Amoroso	Timothy & Joan Taylor
Mr. Casimir Cozzi	James & Chelsea Burris	Gary & Dorothy Zwilling
Mr. Terry Marmion	Jeffrey & Jennifer Craig	Brian & Barbara Bauknecht
Mr. Greg Kassen	Nathan & Carrie Higgerson	Bob & Lori Janota
Mr. Kyle Kellerman	Douglas & Cynthia Kuhl	Jim & Holly McCleary
	Matthew & Angela Lees	Brad & Emily Stroder
	Andy & Cheryl Orlet	Ron & Linda Yates
	William & Judith Rebholz	

Date	Days	Course Title	Lecturer
Sep 2024	13-15	Church History	Dcn. Patrick Donahue
Oct 2024	11-13	Church History	Dcn. Patrick Donahue
Nov 2024	8-10	Intro to Scripture	Kevin Perrotta
Dec 2024	13-15	Intro to Scripture	Kevin Perrotta
Jan 2025	10-12	Ministry of Deacon	Dcn. John McGregor
Feb 2025	14-16	Fundamental Theology	Brad Peper
Mar 2025	14-16	Fundamental Theology	Brad Peper
Apr 2025	11-13	Old Testament	Dcn. Anthony Cassaneto
May 2025	9-11	Old Testament	Dcn. Anthony Cassaneto
Jun 2025	13-15	Spirituality	NOT ASSIGNED



Workshops for Deacon Wives Continue.

By Michelle Miskell, Religion Instructor/Faith Formation Coordinator, Gibault CHS, and wife of Deacon David Miskell

We are thrilled to share that our previous workshop was a resounding success, and we're excited to build on that momentum with a new series of sessions designed especially for the wives of men preparing for the diaconate. Wives of already ordained deacons are also warmly invited to join. These workshops will provide spiritual, emotional, and practical guidance, offering the support you need to walk confidently alongside your spouse on this transformative journey.

We encourage all deacons' wives to get involved and make the most of this valuable opportunity. The workshops take place on the second Saturday of each month in the Undercroft, beginning at 1:00 p.m. and concluding by 3:00 p.m. We look forward to seeing you there!

**Upcoming Sessions: 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Gather in the Cathedral Undercroft**

January 11 – Session 1, Part 2

Women's Workshop Topic:
Understanding the Role, Spiritual,
and Emotional Support

February 15 – Session 2

Women's Workshop Topic:
Practical Considerations in
Diaconate Ministry

May 10 – Session 3

Topic: Subject to be determined.

We're also working to form a team of deacon wives to strengthen this supportive community. If you are aware of wives who might be interested, or if you would like to assist please contact Michelle Miskell:

mmiskell@gibalthawks.com

618-939-3883

Cell: 618-407-2415

We're truly excited about the upcoming programs and the blessings they will bring to everyone involved. We encourage the participation of the deacon class of 2028, as these seminars promise to be both insightful and supportive. Each session will provide valuable insights and opportunities for discussion, so mark your calendars!

WHAT IS THE CLASS OF 2028 DOING?



By: Deacon Candidate Nathan and Carrie Higerson

Our class is progressing into the New Year, and we are all enjoying our formation and time together on the weekends. As a class, we are beginning to see the ways we can serve as deacons in our parishes and the Diocese. The most surprising thing is how quickly we have grown close as a class. We have really learned to lean on each other in our classwork as well as our spiritual lives. Getting to know each candidate and their families has been a wonderful blessing. It was great to visit with the Permanent Deacons and the Bishop at the annual Christmas luncheon in December. Catching up with those deacons in the ministry is always fruitful and a good learning opportunity.

As we progress into the Saint Meinrad classes, I see the emphasis on humility and servanthood in the ministry of a deacon.

The Introduction to Scripture class really pushed us to consider scripture from a variety of angles, and reminded us that the laity we encounter in our ministry will be at all different levels of theological understanding. As deacons, we will be called to help people wherever they are spiritually, to draw closer in their relationship with Christ and His mission for the Church.

In this second year of study, we have begun to understand the Liturgy of the Hours and the blessing they are. It is great to pray with the Church and have the constant prayer for ourselves as well. As intimidating as it was to find everything when we began, it is easier now to follow along. I have even found myself able to truly pray the Psalms as actual prayers in a way that I have not before. We still have a long way to go, and we are thankful for your prayers and support. Keep it up and thank you! May God bless you and your families in 2025!



Opportunity for "come and see," for those considering becoming deacons.

Deacons Called To Serve Some of you were looking forward to the next formation class beginning soon; however, the inquiry process has been delayed until late 2026. If you are seriously discerning your vocation, you're invited to audit with the Deacon Class of 2028 during their formation weekends. No textbooks are required, and there is no charge, but space is limited. If you'd like to attend, please contact the Vocation Office and speak with Martina so she can get you registered.

PREACHING WORKSHOP REGISTRATION

Deacon candidates—single or married—and their wives are invited to the "Listen Up!" Preaching Workshop for Permanent Deacons, taking place February 14–16 at St. Meinrad Archabbey with Fr. Jeff and Dr. Schuhmann. The weekend begins with a special Valentine dinner and social event, where Fr. Jeff will introduce the Flag Page exercise to boost self-awareness in preaching and strengthen marital bonds; single deacons will also gain valuable insights into their preaching styles. On Saturday, participants dive deeper into the Flag Page, then Fr. Jeff leads a session on Good Friday preaching—"Jesus's Valentine to us"—while Dr. Schuhmann advises wives on supporting their husbands' ministries.

Sunday wraps up with final strategies for Good Friday sermons, ensuring you leave with enhanced self-awareness, stronger relationships, and a solid plan for Holy Week. The cost is \$410 for singles and \$595 for couples, covering accommodations, meals, and the Flag Page fee. After registering, you'll receive a link from Fr. Nicolas to complete the Flag Page. Don't miss this opportunity to grow in both your ministry and personal life! To register:

<https://www.saintmeinrad.edu/permanent-deacons/preaching-workshop-registration/?eventid=15361>



Deacons and spouses are invited to join the candidates for lunch and social. Deacons and their spouses can attend at 12:00 p.m. or 5:00 p.m. on formation Saturdays—held the 2nd full weekend of each month—to build relationships, share experiences, and foster spiritual growth.

If you'd like to participate in January Formation, please contact Martina at 618-722-5043; a \$20 donation is suggested, but not required. This month features Father Godfrey presenting "Into to the Roman Missal." offering both candidates and experienced deacons a clearer understanding of these essential liturgical texts.