



BISHOP'S LETTER

WHEN YOU SEE PEOPLE, SMILE GOD'S LOVE TO THEM

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Throughout the holy season of Lent during this Jubilee Year as we serve as pilgrims of hope, we are called time and time again, through the prophets, through the words of Jesus and the ministry of the apostles, to return to God with our whole heart. We receive, as the Prophet Joel extols, the divine attributes of God: He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, rich in kindness, and relenting in punishment. Yet, it is the things of the earth, not seen through the eyes of God, which attract us and in which we divide ourselves and pursue other kingdoms, not the Kingdom of God.

[Click here to read letter](#)

CONTENT

DEACON RETREATS

NEW ANNUAL FORM

MINISTRIES/GOOD NEWS

TRIBUNAL ADVOCATE

DEACON SURVEY RESULTS

CONTINUING FORMATION

LITURGY

MEMORIAL MASS

BIRTHDAYS

LITURGICAL CORNER

DEACON RETREATS

2025 SCHEDULE

MARCH 21-23, 2025

THE HIDDENNESS OF THE DIACONATE

DIRECTED RETREAT

Led by Deacon Joseph Michalak

We will aim to see more truly the hidden (interior) work of conversion in our lives, the hidden manner of the Father's Love, especially through relational prayer, and the particularly hidden character of what is essential to our diaconal participation in Jesus' diakonia. All of these have implications for our marriage and celibacy, too.

ABRIL 25-27, 2025

IDENTIDAD DE LA FAMILIA DIACONAL, SIGNO DE ESPERANZA

RETIRO DIRIGIDO POR EL PADRE
DUBERNEY RODAS GRAJALES

En el marco de la celebración del Año Jubilar 2025 "Peregrinos de esperanza", este retiro ofrece la oportunidad para fortalecer la identidad de la familia diaconal, que es signo de esperanza cristiana. Tendremos la oportunidad de reflexionar y orar juntos, para que al encuentro con Jesús y fortalecidos en la consciencia del don recibido, el servicio diaconal se manifieste como signo de esperanza en el pueblo de Dios al que servimos en el ministerio eclesial, según la indicación del apóstol: "El que ha recibido el don de la palabra, que la enseñe como palabra de Dios. El que ejerce un ministerio, que lo haga como quien recibe de Dios ese poder, para que Dios sea glorificado en todas las cosas, por Jesucristo. ¡A él sea la gloria y el poder, por los siglos de los siglos!" Amén.
(1 Pedro 4,11).

**ALL RETREATS ARE HELD AT SAN PEDRO SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER.
RETREAT COSTS ARE COVERED BY THE DIOCESE OF ORLANDO.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER, VISIT
WWW.SANPEDROCENTER.ORG/DEACON-RETREATS,
SCAN THE **QR CODE** OR CALL **JAZMINE HERNANDEZ** AT
(407) 671-6322 EXT. 115.



NEW ANNUAL FORM

Please remember annual forms are due June 1, 2025. Schedule your pastor meetings now. You must use the new form available at <https://www.orlandodiocese.org/office/diaconate-forms/>

WITH THE RECENT ROLLOUT OF THE NEW FORM, WE'D LIKE TO ANSWER A FEW GOOD QUESTIONS RAISED BY DEACONS:

Why was the form rolled out now instead of when the new fiscal year begins?

- After several iterations of feedback from Deanery dean leads, the form was ready in January. While we could have waited until July, there was no harm in rolling it out now when deacons are actively focused on completing their annual forms.

Many of what was formerly considered 'continuing formation' is not on this form. I often got a lot of units for these activities. Will there be negative consequences this year if I don't reach my minimum number?

- There will be no consequences for not reaching your number. We know this is a transition year. Using this new form allows you to plan where to focus in the year ahead. Continuing formation includes classes, webinars, retreats, days of reflection, and spiritual reading.

Do commentaries used for homily preparation count under "Books Read on Theology or Spirituality?"

- Yes, if you reference a certain commentary on a regular basis during the year, you count it as a book read that year. For example, if you regularly reference the New Jerome Biblical Commentary as you prepare homilies throughout the year, you may list it as one of the books read and earn three units for the year. However, you cannot list the entire book multiple times.

On page 4, Section D, 4, will the Diocese be offering programs for 'a-e'?

- This section seems to confuse many deacons. It refers to a personal development plan. It does not ask you to list ways in which you are serving the community, rather what you are doing to improve yourself in these five areas. For example, in Spirituality and Prayer, you might list some new spiritual practices you plan to add in the year ahead (e.g. journaling, daily Mass, more frequent reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation). Under Marriage & Family Life, you might plan to take a couple's retreat with your wife, add a scheduled date night each week, or block off a set number of nights each week where you don't have parish meetings or ministry activity. This isn't about completing programs as much as it is making changes to your life in these areas to make you a healthier person, couple, or deacon. We will not be offering any specific program.



GOOD NEWS SECTION

Deacon Jimmy Avellan, Coordinator for our Ministry to the Incarcerated had CFRC Retreat February 7-8, 2025. Huge thanks to Deacon Jimmy and all volunteers in this ministry. If you feel called to help with this ministry, please contact Deacon Jimmy and he will guide you. Email: MTICoord@orlandodiocese.org

MINISTRIES

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF CENTRAL FLORIDA, PATHWAYS TO CARE.

Learn how to volunteer.

<https://pathwaystocare.org/volunteer/>

TOURISM

Contact Deacon Joe Gassman to discover what is needed to serve at the Basilica

[Email: jgassman@orlandodiocese.org](mailto:jgassman@orlandodiocese.org)

The Marriage Tribunal is looking for an individual to serve/assist as an Annulment Advocate for the parishes of Brevard, Orange and Polk counties.

TRIBUNAL ADVOCATE NEEDED

RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

- Explaining the annulment process to petitioners
- Assisting and representing parishioners before the Marriage Tribunal by introducing petitions for Declarations of Nullity on their behalf
- Recording petitioner testimonies and acting as the liaison between petitioners and the Marriage Tribunal
- Updating pastors regarding cases from their parishes
- Assisting OCIA directors in determining marital status of candidates and catechumens
- Maintaining a close working relationship with the Marriage Tribunal Staff

SOUTHERN DEANERY IS IN DESPERATE NEED

The Advocate should possess an understanding and training in the annulment process in the Catholic Church as well as an understanding of the theology of the Sacrament of Marriage.

IF INTERESTED, PLEASE CONTACT DIANA ANDERSON AT:
407.246.4851 OR DANDERSON@ORLANDODIOCESE.ORG



DEACON SURVEY RESULTS

We appreciate the more than 100 men who took the time to respond to the survey that we send out approximately every 5 years to check in on the ministerial experience and satisfaction of our deacons. We had a good cross-section of responses from all six deaneries.

SOME INTERESTING FACTS:

YEARS AT CURRENT PARISH

10+ YEARS:	24%
4-10 YEARS:	34%
0-3 YEARS:	43%

CURRENTLY ASSISTING AT OTHER PARISHES

This was an interesting percentage for us, as we only know a few deacons who have requested permission to serve at more than one parish. We will follow up with the deaneries to better understand this number.

SATISFACTION WITH PRESENT ASSIGNMENT

- **90%** of our deacons are **Very Satisfied** or **Satisfied** with their current parish assignment. **8%** are **Neutral**, and **2%** are **Dissatisfied**.
 - *As a reminder, deacons may request a transfer when they find their current parish assignment is not working out as well. Please don't hesitate to call Deacon Dave to discuss.*
- Overall, the **Relationship with your Pastor** score was **very high**, with an average rating of **4.63**. That's a very good sign!
- When we asked if you were a **Deacon in Good Standing**, **98%** said "**Yes**." However, when we asked in the next question what forms you had turned in, almost **20%** said they had not turned in their **Annual Forms** and more than **20%** had not attended an **Overnight Retreat**. Please remember both are required to be a **Deacon in Good Standing**.
- When scoring the **Main Areas of Your Life**, deacons gave the **highest scores** to their **Marriages/Relationships**, followed by **Prayer Life**. The lowest levels were for **Health and Stress Levels**. When asked which areas of improvement would most positively impact your life, deacons ranked a '**Better Prayer Life**' as first (even though this was a highly ranked area), followed by '**Self Care**', which was the lowest ranked.

AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY FROM THE COMMENTS

Thank you to the number of deacons who shared comments. We always review them for common issues, or issues that present some possibilities for growth.

THERE WERE THREE INTERESTING COMMENTS WE WOULD LIKE TO EXPLORE FURTHER:

Help Pastors understand the work/family/ministry balance of deacons

- We know this is an area several deacons struggle with. Some pastors do not fully understand the limitations that deacons have due to their obligations to family and work, expecting them to be more fully available to serve like priests. We are currently formulating some approaches to help educate our pastors over the coming year.

We need a ‘Theology of Aging’ for our deacons to help them transition into a less active ministry as they age.

- While we offered an Aging with Grace retreat last year, we do need to do more. This is an important area to develop.

Improve the fraternal integration of extern deacons.

- With more than 50% of our deacons having moved here after their ordination, we need to do a better job to help them be fully integrated into our community. While we have instituted an Extern Orientation meeting at the Chancery, we need to do more. This is especially true at the Deanery level. One deacon commented that deanery meetings can seem like ‘reunions for men who had gone through formation together,’ but the externs can feel left out. .

On page 4, Section D, 4, will the Diocese be offering programs for ‘a-e?’

- This section seems to confuse many deacons. It refers to a personal development plan. It does not ask you to list ways in which you are serving the community, rather what you are doing to improve yourself in these five areas. For example, in Spirituality and Prayer, you might list some new spiritual practices you plan to add in the year ahead (e.g. journaling, daily Mass, more frequent reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation). Under Marriage & Family Life, you might plan to take a couple’s retreat with your wife, add a scheduled date night each week, or block off a set number of nights each week where you don’t have parish meetings or ministry activity. This isn’t about completing programs as much as it is making changes to your life in these areas to make you a healthier person, couple, or deacon. We will not be offering any specific program.

OTHER REQUESTS IN THE COMMENTS

Can we provide more links to classes for continuing formation?

- Yes, we will continue to do that as we are made aware of opportunities. These are provided in direct emails to all deacons or included in the monthly Director's Notes.

Deacons should be allowed to wear clerics

- Across the United States, national surveys show that about 50% of dioceses allow deacons to wear clerics and 50% do not. It is up to the Ordinary of the Diocese. Bishop Noonan has considered this question on multiple occasions and has decided deacons will not wear clerics at this time.

Could we have reciprocal statewide faculties between dioceses?

- There is no process to do that currently for either priests or deacons.

Why can't Convocations be more than a day to allow for greater substance?

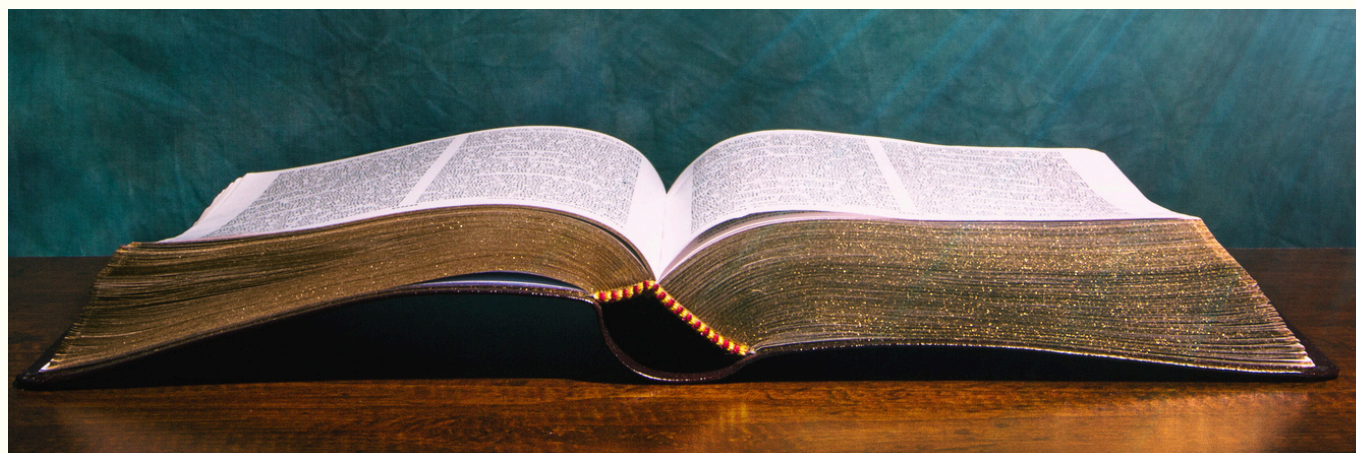
- This has been considered before, but most deacons have supported staying with a one-day Convocation. For deacons in the workforce, it is not possible to do a 3+ day convocation as the submitted comment requested.

"I thought you said this was an anonymous survey, but you asked for my parish and I'm the only deacon assigned there, so you now know who I am."

- While that may give us the opportunity to drill into the collected data to find that out, we do not do that nor have the desire to do so. The data is summarized before it is reviewed by the Director of Permanent Deacons.

FORMATION OF DEAN MENTORS

Our next workshop for those wishing to be a mentor for men in formation will be offered via Zoom on the evening of June 10th. An email will be sent out a month in advance to confirm the date and time. If you feel called to walk with one of our formation men and their wives, please RSVP at that time. You must have been ordained for a minimum of three years to be eligible. You must also be in good standing to be assigned as a mentor.



CONTINUING FORMATION

FREE WEBINAR SERIES - REGISTRATION NOW LIVE!

On Wednesdays, from May 7 to June 4, the FDLC will be hosting another free webinar series. The topic will be **The Art of Celebrating: Something More is Required.**

MAY 7
UNDERSTANDING ARS CELEBRANDI

MAY 14
THE ROLE OF THE ASSEMBLY

MAY 21
ARTFUL PRESIDING

MAY 28
LAY LITURGICAL MINISTERS

JUNE 4
THE ART OF LITURGICAL MUSIC

Speakers will include

Bishop Mark Seitz, Father Paul Turner, Father Bruce Cinquegrani, Sister Joyce Ann Zimmerman, Monsignor Michael Begolly, and more!

Registration is now live at:

www.fdlc.org/artofcelebrating2025

As always, if you have a conflict with your schedule, all registered persons will receive a link to watch the recording.





LITURGY

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE **CHRISM MASS, MONDAY, APRIL 14, 2025, BEGINNING AT 11 A.M. AT THE BASILICA OF THE NATIONAL SHRINE OF MARY, QUEEN OF THE UNIVERSE.**

IN REMEMBRANCE

PRAY FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIED

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and may perpetual light shine upon them. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

Amen.



Memorial Mass

FRIDAY, MARCH 28

Mary, Mother of God Chapel
San Pedro Spiritual Development Center

Happy Birthday

— TO OUR SENIOR DEACONS! —

DEACON JACK 88
MARTIN

DEACON NICK 86
VARSAONA

DEACON SERGIO 83
COLON

DEACON EDDIE 82
BERRIOS

DEACON MIKLOS 81
BERGSZASZI



DIOCESAN CALENDAR



Click to view
Diocesan Calendar

LITURGICAL CORNER



**DIOCESAN
LITURGICAL
CALENDAR**



**DIOCESAN
BULLETIN
ANNOUNCEMENTS**



**CONFIRMATION
SCHEDULE**



**ANUNCIO DEL
BOLETÍN
DIOCESANO**



**MARRIAGE
PREPARATION**



DIRECTOR'S NOTES FOR DEACONS
MARCH 2025 | VOL. 33