



# DIOCESE OF FALL RIVER

## OFFICE OF THE

# PERMANENT DIACONATE



Bishop Edgar  
da Cunha

## DEACON UPDATE

### REST IN SOLITUDE

We've all faced so many challenges during the past several months. We have had to pursue creative ways of continuing our ministries in parishes and in our various apostolates. For some, the pandemic has been a long desert journey, perhaps leaving us in the fog of uncertainty and worry about our futures. Just recently as a means of surveying morale, I was asked to reflect upon the desert journey of the pandemic and what impact it has had on my ministry and priesthood. Like so many I have wrestled with the isolation of loss, separation, distancing and have had to face the hidden faces of so many "masked" concerns. As we soon enter into the desert of lent, I found myself encouraged by the two Sunday gospels prior to Ash Wednesday.

Both accounts from Mark 1:29-39 and Mark 1:40-45 speak of the ministries of healing and reaching out to provide comfort to those in a pandemic world of isolation and fear. The needs are so many put into both accounts Jesus enters into a place of "rest" and he invites those within His circle of care to come to that "out of the way place" so that they too can "rest" and be restored. As I thought of my pandemic journey I am grateful. Yes grateful for the time of being able to extend, as Jesus does, the hand of care but also grateful for the invitation of allowing the Lord of the journey to extend His hand and restore and expand my heart so that I might better offer His care. The pandemic has been a gift to me because it has invited me to find my "resting" place. But make no mistake, that "out of way place" is not a running away from the demands of ministry nor is it a secret place of self-centered quietism. Rather the "resting place" is an opportunity to listen more fully to God's word, it's a place where I can bring my own broken heart and reconnect with the heartbeat of Christ and find meaning, encouragement and simply to hear the words "you are loved!" The Sunday before Ash Wednesday is Valentine Day. The desert has become my Valentine blessing because it's the place where my heart can rests with Christ's and for that I am grateful. There are so many questions raised by the pandemic desert that confront the human heart. There are those in the Gospel accounts who would give a quick answer to the drama of human suffering. Jesus doesn't give an eloquent explanation but He extends a heartfelt response. Jesus extends His hand and Peter's mother-in-law is healed and serves. Jesus extends His hand and the leper is cured. However the healing hand that embraces come from a fullness of a heart that is embraced by the resting heart in the Father's love. Soon we enter into the forty days desert of lent. I invite you to open your heart to the opportunity of gratitude. Allow your giving hand to be expanded by the "out of way place" that the Lord invites you to. Lent is a time of sacrifices and fasting and often we give up certain treats that we enjoy so much. I invite you to add one simply letter to your desert journey, the letter **S** and transform your **desert** into a true **dessert** as your rest in the **Solitude** of the Lord's heart of love. May that kind of dessert be always on our desert diet!

In Christ Love, Fr. Bob Oliveira

### CEU REPORTS NOW DUE

As Deacons of the diocese of Fall River, we recognize the need for continuing intellectual, personal, emotional and spiritual development. We also understand that no formation program can possibly teach or anticipate the needs of the deacon that might arise in an ever-changing world. However, we do know that growth is an integral part of our ministry, needed to develop a deeper understanding of self as well as the world around us.

Continuing formation requires daily prayer, spiritual direction and training courses to increase understanding of the Catholic faith and theology. With this in mind, the Fall River Diocese has established guidelines for the ongoing formation of Permanent Deacons. They may be found on the website.

To accomplish the aforementioned, it is the policy of the

Diocese of Fall River that all permanent deacons given faculties to minister within the Diocese must complete a minimum of thirty (30) hours of continuing formation each year. Only the Co-Directors of the Permanent Diaconate can give waiver for these requirements.

These CEU reports are to be submitted yearly to the Office for the Permanent Diaconate. **In order to be considered a deacon in good standing in the Diocese of Fall River, CEU reports are required yearly of all active deacons.**

Please take some time now to start pulling together your CEU hours so that you can submit the report by the end of January. Please recall that we moved CEU reporting to a calendar year (January, 2020 - December 2020). Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

## OFFICE CONTACT

As a reminder, the diaconate office email address is office@frpermanentdiaconate.com. This address is currently available for your use. The verizon email address will no longer work. Please make the change in your address book.

The address remains, Office of the Permanent Diaconate, 121 Mt Pleasant St., New Bedford, Ma 02740 Thank you!

## VERIFY YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

In the Deacon Portal section of the website you will find the Contact List (please verify your information in there and let us know if it needs to be updated.)

## PHOTO REQUEST

We are in the process of finalizing the website. We will be featuring the photos of all active deacons in the diocese. Please send a photo to Deacon Frank at deaconfranklucca@frpermanentdiaconate.com as soon as possible. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

## OFFICE STRATEGIC PLANNING TO CONTINUE

Over the last several years, the Deacon and Wives' Councils worked hard to assist us in setting goals for the Office of the Permanent Diaconate. As a result of their work, we are now prepared to continue the process. In order to do so we need your input. Please watch for a survey for deacons and their spouses which is being developed and will be sent out to you. Your input is crucial for future planning.

## CURRENT FORMATION CLASSES ONLINE

The formation classes for our current candidates are now available online for any deacons or spouses who may wish to view them. These are an excellent opportunity for ongoing formation. The positive is that you'll get to view the content and not have to take any of the exams! In addition, these may also be reported for CEU credit.

## ALBS

The Sisters who sew the albs for our candidates will be coming here soon. If any of you are in need of a new alb and would like to order one, please let Jackie know and we'll let you know when they are coming to the area for measurements.

## 2020/2021 COUNCIL MEMBERS

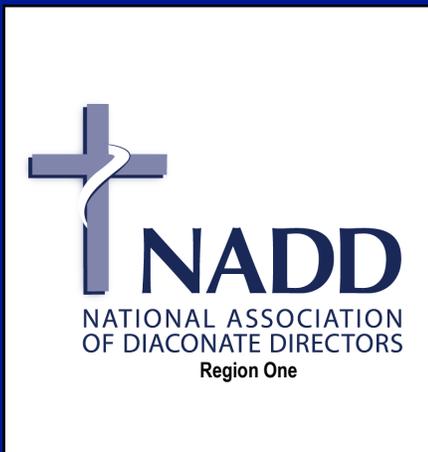
### Deacon Council

Deacon Keith Caldwell  
Deacon Robert Craig  
Deacon Gary Donahue  
Deacon Gary John  
Deacon Paul Levesque  
Deacon Joseph McGinley - Deacon Advocate  
Deacon Del Molloy

### Wives' Council

Kathleen Craig  
Barbara-Anne Foley  
Carol Levesque  
Marsha Murphy  
Joanne Regali  
*One open positon (Cape Cod Deaneries)*





# NADD 1 WEBINAR SERIES

*The NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DEACON DIRECTORS REGION ONE is pleased to announce the next in a series of webinars offered to our deacons on an ongoing basis! Join with brother deacons from around the Region!*

## MAY WEBINAR

# OFF THE STREETS MINISTRY TO THE HOMELESS



### **Deacon Mike Oles**

Deacon Oles has been married to his best friend, Kathleen, for 50 years. Together they have four Children, all married, and ten living Grandchildren. He was ordained a Deacon in the Diocese of Bridgeport, CT by (then) Bishop William Lori 2002. Deacon Oles has been assigned to St. John Neumann Parish since 2012.

Founded a program in 2009 to Help The Homeless OFF THE STREETS One Person At A Time, with Chapters in four locations in three States, so far (CA, CT, PA). More than 2,000 taken OFF THE Streets, with approximately 1,000 in Lancaster County, PA alone (80% women and children). Deacon Oles has a B. S. Physics, Fairfield University 1964 and a M. S. Systems Management 1977. He was also a Lt. Col. USAF and retired in 1984.

These sessions will also be recorded and made available to deacons by way of their Diocese Office of the

## Tuesday, May 11, 2021 7:00 pm

Join Online Webinar via computer, tablet or smartphone

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83026229267>

Meeting ID: 830 2622 9267

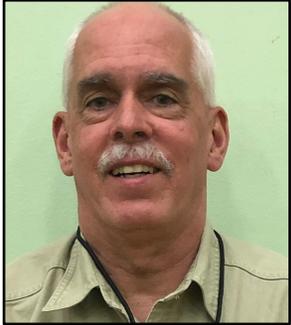
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+13126266799,,83026229267# US (Chicago)

# NEW FEATURE

## Meet Our Deacon Candidates

*This month we welcome Michael Wojcik of St. Andrew the Apostle Parish, Taunton, MA*



I almost didn't make it, coming into this world 2 months early with a collapsed lung, 2 hernias, jaundice and a hurricane for good measure, I was ready... so I've had 60 something bonus years. Born and raised in Taunton, still home to me. I learned from the Greatest Generation: Dad, the practical, charity begins at home and community service, Mom, compassion, you have to love everyone but it's ok not to like everyone and service to church. If I think about it, I'm kinda boring, I live on the same

street (just not the old homestead), attend the same church, even have the same phone number, my entire life. Following Dad's lead, the unspoken expectation was that we would attend mass as a family. Early on, I was taught to understand the mass was not about me, it was about praising God for our blessings. 12 years of Catholic education enhanced my knowledge of my creator, you didn't have to go too far in the Baltimore Catechism (#6: to know, love and serve...) to understand why we were put on this earth. In the 60's, drugs meant something different in our family, my brother (3 yrs my senior) and I were drug to New York, drug to Connecticut, Canada and Cape Cod to visit aunts, uncles and cousins, but we never minded it, as kids we would get together to create our own adventures, we learned about relationships. Then came college, I attended a technical school in Boston working towards gainful employment. Mechanical engineering was my area of study. My maternal grandmother gave me a music box at age 10, that was it, I'm thinkin' this is IT! This translated into a very rewarding 38 year career (yes, with one company) as a process troubleshooter (helping people solve their manufacturing process problems) for a large process control instrumentation company, I didn't have to join the Navy to see the world. As the temporal world demands lessened (home, car etc.) I found more time to serve my church and community, I joined the Knights of Columbus and St Vincents. Well I can tell you, if you want to be on the front lines providing basic human necessities to your brother join the Vincents. If you want to have first hand knowledge about keeping your brother (who is down on his luck) out of trouble then join the Knights. Along these lines, if you want to learn about your faith, try teaching it to teenagers in Confirmation class, very challenging! At the beginning of 2017, I decided to retire early to help out Father Ed M. at church, so I made the transition to Sacristan at the start of 2018. When you look up inspiration (for the Diaconate) in the dictionary, you will find a picture >^< of Deacon Alan T. (with assistance from Fr. Tim R. and Fr. Ed M.!) I firmly believe we are the sum of who we interact with during our lifetimes and I am thankful to the good Lord for providing me with many great examples that I have and continue to learn from, so I'm blessed to continue in the service of the Lord.

# THE WIVES' CORNER

*This month's commentary is by Elizabeth Porter*

## Gardening, Life, and Prayer



I love the early morning hours of the day, to experience the world “waking up”. I go to the den, light a candle and begin my morning quiet time: morning prayer, daily readings, and a reflection. I need that process the daily readings and reflection to start my day off, it’s my daily road map. I am amazed at the symmetry of the daily selections and how they reflect the seasons of the year, and how, as I evolve (some may call it age...) the meanings of those readings change.

The other morning, on my way to the den, the full moon was bathing the side yard, making “my” yard look like it was straight out of Clement Moore’s “Night Before Christmas” – “the moon on the breast of the new fallen snow, gave a luster of mid-day to objects below...”. While the snow wasn’t “new fallen” it was definitely white and shined. It wasn’t exactly as bright as mid-day, but man, the light was crystal clear and pure: the shadows from the trees, so beautiful, casting a shadow across the yard, leading to a little garden patch. Or better yet, what I try, year after to year to create as a garden. I felt like the scene before me was almost signaling me to give it another go; this could be the year to create the garden of my dreams. Which led me to start, once again, my simple attempt on planning for my garden, pouring over emails to select the best plants for the soil in that little square, based on, soil, the amount of sun time, and what plants would allow me to ultimately create “my vision”. The truth is, this is an almost annual failure. It’s like trying to watch Charlie Brown kick the football. Every year, I earnestly try to create a small kitchen garden, and every year, something comes up to prevent me from maintaining the garden. I get a few things from it: mint, basil, but that’s about it.

While those thoughts and actions have been swirling in my head, I started to notice a lot of the recent daily readings involved Jesus sharing parables that involved plants, seeds, and soil. I stopped, paused and have gradually come to realize I’ve been putting quite a bit of effort on Spring activity with the goal of a great garden. But Lent is right around the corner, and I asked myself, what are my plans for Lent? What work will I be doing to prepare the soil of my soul, my mind, and my heart to move me along my path and to help me better address my purpose in life? St. Marguerite Bourgeoys, founder of the Congregation of Notre Dame in Montreal (1620-1700) once said: “It seems to me that we do not pay enough attention to prayer, for unless it arises from the heart which ought to be its center, it is no more than a fruitless dream. Prayer ought to carry over into our thoughts, our words, and our actions.”

Hmm...maybe I should spend more time planning my Lenten activities, and little less time on my garden dreams. My intent here is not to minimize gardens. Gardens serve very important purposes: they help nourish and make the world a more beautiful place. And for some people, gardening is their gift and their mission. Gardeners are artists. If a perfect garden is meant for me to do it will happen (with a little work). Maybe the perfect kitchen garden I imagine is not the garden I was meant to create. But prayer and meditation will help me find my mission, my garden. “Man may make plans in his heart, but what the tongue utters is from the Lord” (Proverbs, 16: 1). Maybe it’s not seed catalogues or emails I should be focused on, but rather, how will I wisely use this upcoming Lent as a way to achieve the plans God has for me? And what about you? How are your Lenten plans going? It’s never too early (or late) to start those plans. I wish you all a meaningful Lenten journey.



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# **LENTEN SMALL GROUP PROGRAM FOR DEACONS AND FAMILIES!**



THE  
**SEARCH**

**Monday Evenings Online  
February 22 - April 5 at 7:00 pm**

We invite all deacons, candidates, wives, widows and their children to join us online for this seven week small group experience. Each week we will gather at 7:00 pm for a short video and group sharing .

**Our hosts for this experience will be Deacon Robert Craig,  
Kathleen Craig, and Maura and Patrick Craig.**

This is the perfect opportunity to join together as a diaconal community made up of our family members.. Discussion groups are age based (high school age and above.)

Please register at [www.frpermanentdiaconate.com](http://www.frpermanentdiaconate.com) today. Login link will be sent to you by email.

# CALENDAR UPDATES

**Deacon Retreat 2020**  
LaSalette Retreat Center  
**Postponed**

**Day of Recollection –  
Candidates\*\***  
March 20, 2021  
Holy Trinity Parish Hall

**Deacon Convocation 2021\*\***  
April 17, 2021  
Holy Trinity Parish Hall

**Couples Retreat\*\***  
August 20-22, 2021  
Miramar Retreat Center  
Duxbury, MA

*\*\*All in person dates are tentative and depend  
on the Covid-19 situation at the time.*

**NADD Region 1 Assembly\*\***  
November 6-7, 2021  
Southbridge Conference Center  
Southbridge, MA

## NADD Region 1 Assembly

### "A New Way to Be Church: Parish Renewal from the Outside In"

*The 2020 Assembly has been  
postponed due to the current situation*



**New date**

**November 6-7, 2021**



## Birthdays

Brian Dunn 4  
Ernest Gendron 8  
Ralph Guerra 9  
C. Michael Hickey 10  
Joseph Medeiros 21  
Maurice Ouellette 1  
Lawrence St. Onge 28  
David Pierce 20  
Matthew Sweeney 7  
Richard Zeich 1  
Michael Zonghetti 22

## Prayer Requests

- Marie Guy - wife of Deacon Mike Guy
  - Deacon Dan Donovan
  - Deacon Bob Lorenzo
  - Alice Surozenski, wife of Deacon Tony Surozenski
  - Carolyn, daughter of Deacon Dominic Messina
  - Janice Fitzpatrick wife of Deacon John Fitzpatrick
  - Deacon Eduardo Pacheco
  - Patry Lukac, wife of Deacon Ted Lukac
  - Deacon Steve Minninger
  - Candidate Michael Wojcik
- ...and for all those that we do not know of  
that are in need of prayers and support

## Office of the Permanent Diaconate

**Father Robert Oliveira** - frboboliveira@frpermanentdiaconate.com

**Deacon Frank Lucca** - deaconfranklucca@frpermanentdiaconate.com

*Diocesan Co-Directors*

**Deacon Joseph McGinley** - deaconjosephmcginley@frpermanentdiaconate.com

*Deacon Advocate*

**Jackie Collins** - office@frpermanentdiaconate.com

*Administrative Assistant*

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