



DIOCESE OF FALL RIVER OFFICE OF THE PERMANENT DIACONATE



Bishop Edgar da Cunha

DEACON UPDATE

A Grateful Heart

I think it's safe to say that we may be a little relieved to see the passing of 2020! While the challenges of a pandemic have confronted our spirits, we wait in hope for brighter days. In hope we make our resolutions for the New Year. As we have navigated the demanding waters of this past year, the quality of our resolutions for 2021 may have changed. Isolation and losses have tempted longing hearts. We long to remove the "masks" of fear and anxiety and walk with hearts more transparent in love and care for each other. I found the post-Christmas octave readings filled with rich promises and hopes for a New Year. The central prayers of those key figures in the readings, Mary, Zechariah, Simeon, Anna, are canticles of thanksgiving and praise. We could make our usual New Year's resolutions, lose weight, exercise more, work harder, be kinder, but could we commit to one simple promise as we face our future? I would suggest that each day we "sing a song"! The song we sing might not make us the winner of the "Voice" but the melody of our song will be "The Voice", the voice of God's love in the world. The notes of our song will be rich in thanksgiving. Each note of our song of thanksgiving and praise highlighting the lyrics of the names of those we love and the symphony of God's love for us. May our resolution for 2021 be a hope filled Canticle of Thanksgiving and Praise! The poet George Herbert in his poem entitled "Gratefulness" suggests:

Thou that hast giv'n so much to me,
Give one thing more, a grateful heart.
See how thy beggar works on thee
By art

Yes we are poor beggars and our art is sometimes less than a masterpiece and our song at times sung off key! Behold, the beggar in the manger, the love song of a cross and sing a joyful song each day in 2021!

Fr. Bob Oliveira

CEU REPORTS DUE JANUARY 30, 2021

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.

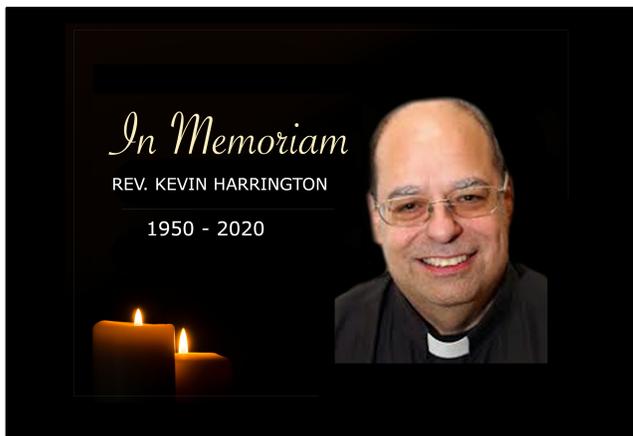
Continuing formation requires daily prayer, spiritual direction and training courses to increase understanding of the Catholic faith and theology. With this in mind, the Fall River Diocese has established guidelines for the ongoing formation of Permanent Deacons. They may be found on the website.

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!

COVID-19 VACCINE

At a recent board meeting of the Deacon Directors in Region 1, there was a discussion concerning deacons and priests and the vaccine. It might be suggested that deacons and priests are frontline workers and should received the vaccine. Rather than try to get our government to accept that deacons and priests are frontline workers, it was suggested that if a deacon works in a prison, hospital or nursing home...to contact their admin to be added to the list for those groups.

FORMATION CLASSES AND WEBINARS NOW AVAILABLE ON THE DEACON PORTAL

All of the formation classes have been recorded during the last year and are available to all deacons and their families to view onDemand! We have also started to add the webinars to the site.

All of this is available by accessing the Deacon Portal. Classes and webinars earn CEU credits.

POPE ANNOUNCES YEARLONG REFLECTION ON FAMILY, 'AMORIS LAETITIA'

As the fifth anniversary of his apostolic exhortation "Amoris Laetitia" approaches, Pope Francis announced that the Catholic Church will dedicate more than a year to focusing on the family and conjugal love. During his Sunday Angelus address Dec. 27,2020 , the pope commemorated the feast of the Holy Family and said that it served as a reminder "of the example of evangelizing with the family" as highlighted in his exhortation. Beginning March 19, 2021, he said, the year of reflection on "Amoris Laetitia" will be an opportunity "to focus more closely on the contents of the document."

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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.

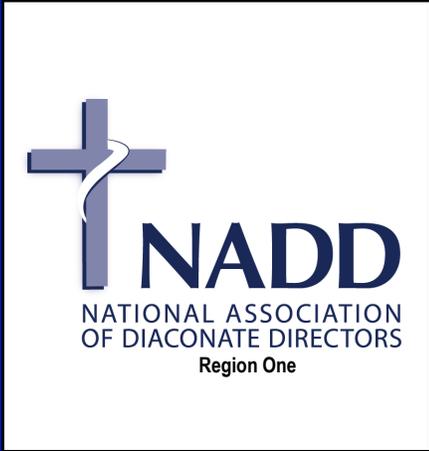
New Website NOW OPEN!

Our new website is now live with enhanced information and capabilities. It will house a deacon portal with access to all the important information that our deacons, candidates and wives may need - including contact lists, access to webinars and class recordings.

Visit www.frpermanentdiaconate.com

Portal Access: Contact office for password and user name.





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!

FEBRUARY WEBINAR

Spiritual Ministry to Those with Mental Health Issues



Deacon Adam Michaele

Deacon Adam is a Permanent Deacon for the Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut. Ordained in 1989, Adam is currently assigned to Saint Margaret Parish in Madison, CT. He has an MA in Pastoral Ministry with a concentration in Spiritual Direction from Saint Joseph College in West Hartford, CT. Since 2003, Deacon Adam along with his wife, Rose, developed and have been active in a Wellness Ministry. Their daughter and son have a mental illness. The ministry provides spiritual comfort and support for those with mental illness for the Eastern Shoreline parishes in Connecticut. Meetings are held twice a month with additional social and religious activities.

Deacon Adam was also a member of the Behavioral Health Patient and Family Advisory Council at Yale New Haven Hospital (YNHH) for 8 years retiring in 2019 after 4 years as Co-Chair. He also is active in supporting other patient and family experience activities and projects at YNHH. He and his wife also support a Mood Disorders Peer Support group on a weekly basis. Adam is a member of NAMI and is trained in Mental Health First Aid. Adam also participated and completed the Mental Health Minister training from the Catholic Institute of Mental Health Ministry at the University at San Diego in 2019.

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

Tuesday, February 9, 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

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,83026229267# US (Chicago)

NEW FEATURE

Meet Our Deacon Candidates

This month we welcome Shawn Seybert of St. Theresa of the Child of Jesus Parish



Greetings! Blessings to you in this new year of 2021! My name is Shawn Seybert and I am a candidate for the diaconate and honored to share a few words about my journey. I am from a steel town in western PA called Butler. I grew up in a traditional working-class family of seven kids. My father learned his surveying craft in the military. He worked for and eventually bought the land surveying company he started with at age 21. My mother was a stay-at-home mother and all-around rock for the family. The example of my parents is deep within me. They worked hard, had an openness to life and were faithful in service within the church. I owe a debt of gratitude to them.

My youth and young adult life was centered on friendship, sports and work. After being invited to a round of golf with my brothers around the age of 12, I got hooked on the sport for the rest of my life. My dreams of becoming a professional golfer drew me to Florida after high school to pursue a professional career. After three years and little progress, I turned to my studies. At this same time, I met my wife at the University of South Florida. She made me want to become a man worthy of her. This propelled me to work very hard to earn my degrees that would eventually allow me to find my life-long professional career as a School Psychologist.

Sylvia and I married in 1993 and had our first son in 1997. We moved to New England to raise our family. We had two more boys in 1999 and 2003. Samuel, David and Nathan became the center of our lives for the next 20 years. They are currently 23, 21 and 17. My wife is the Retreat Coordinator and Shrine Secretary at La Sallette after being a stay-at-home mom for many years. Samuel is almost finished with his doctoral degree in physical therapy, David earned a marketing degree and is working in Boston and Nathan is applying to colleges, working and running track/cross country. We worked hard to be the best examples of love for them.

My faith journey began as a Sunday Catholic as a kid. I fell hard in college and the Catholic Student Center picked me up and taught me how to pray and connect with God. My loving wife changed my life with a simple invitation to a Cursillo weekend in 1991. On this weekend, I met Jesus. Through the team, the talks and the chapel visits I came to understand the personal love of God for me. With the generous invitation of Cursillo friends, I began “grouping” weekly, which is a practice of making weekly commitments and then reviewing them with friends. I have been “grouping” in this form for the past 29 years. Through this process, I have learned to make promises to God and to allow him to work in my life. There is much to tell, but the short version is that I have grown to allow myself to be clay in God’s hands. I have been blessed with a glimpse of His love and know I have found the “pearl of great price”. I am all in for our Lord.

Why the diaconate? I have felt called to leadership. I pursued a leadership path in education, but it apparently was not His way. Leadership in the church? This was revealed to me and I answered the call to step up and test this out. As I pursue the studies and grow with my diaconate brothers, I pray for the discernment to know God’s will. I pray, “Here I am, Lord” and “Be it done unto me according to your will”. If we allow the Holy Spirit to animate our lives, how blessed our lives will be. May the peace of God be with each of you. Please pray for me and the other brothers of our diaconate class. Peace.

THE WIVES' CORNER

This month's commentary is by Barbara-Anne Foley

The Real Presence of Christ

A very dear friend of ours, Deacon Christian DeVos, sent us a gift for Christmas "Christ in the Storm, An Extraordinary Blessing for a Suffering World" by Pope Francis.

The book is very helpful at reminding us as Catholics, that even in this Pandemic "storm", there is still so much hope and good in this world if we can simply look for it and remind ourselves to go back to our roots.

The Compiler and Editor of this book, Jaymie Stuart Wolfe, wrote "We do not face life's tragedies alone. The suffering we all encounter at one time or another can bring us not only to our knees but also to the beating heart of the living God. No matter who you are or what your storm is, the Catholic Church wants you to know Christ is with you in the midst of it all."

When I read this for the second time reading the book, I was immediately transformed back 10 years ago to our Pilgrimage to Ireland. While we were there, our Pastor at the time Fr. Edward Healey, brought us to a very secluded outdoor area in the lush green woods for a special mass. He prefaced it by reminding us that in our country we often times take for granted that we not only have access to a Mass pretty much any day of the week, but that we also have access to the Eucharist. We were driven on our bus and were located somewhere in Donegal. This specific area we were in was not allowed to hold Mass at all, their Catholics had taken to underground Masses, often located under Bars, so we were told by our Guide that we needed to be careful and not loud. The bus parked deep into these woods and could not be seen at all. When we walked into the opening, I began to cry. There before me was an altar made of stone, and pews were tree trunks with the bench made from a tree cut in half-very primitive. What was more important to me was hanging in the branches were religious icons, rosary beads, candles. and small statues. My mind was filled with sadness that these Catholics had to worship in secret and pray they did not get caught, but that they were missing the real true presence of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Eucharist and that made me cry. A few minutes after our arrival, a woman wandered into this secret Altar in the woods and at first, we were all nervous

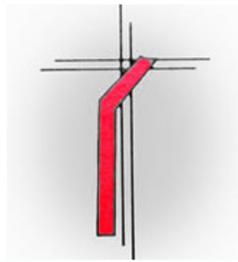


thinking we were in trouble. She went to Fr. Healey and asked if she could stay kissing his hand and telling us that her mother had died 10 years ago to the day and that day was the last time, she attended a real Mass with the Eucharist!! She went on to say that on her way over, she was praying to our Blessed Mother "that she would be able to see and feel the presence of God at her special Altar in the woods today because it was the 10th anniversary of her Mother's death and God always answers our prayers and that Fr. Healey, Fr, Carlos and my husband Deacon John were God's answer to her prayers! Chills!

She reminded ALL of us present that day to NEVER take the Eucharist for granted ever, and that we need to remind ourselves every day just how fortunate we are that we have access to it every day.



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DIOCESE OF FALL RIVER

OFFICE OF THE

**PERMANENT
DIACONATE**

WEBINAR SERIES

The Office of the Permanent Diaconate in cooperation with the Deacon Council is pleased to present the Deacon Webinar Series. CEU credit is granted for participation in the webinars. All webinars will also be recorded and made available on the diaconate website for later viewing.

JANUARY WEBINAR

**Make a Friend, Be a Friend,
Bring that Friend to Christ!**
Forming Christian Leaders

with Rev. James Doherty C.S.C.

Wednesday, January 20, 2021
6:30 PM - Evening Prayer
7:00 PM - Webinar

Online Zoom access link will be made available prior to the webinar and also available on the Fall River Diaconate website

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

January

Richard Biron 29
Robert Craig 15
Gabriel Liegey 2
Frank Lucca 26
Del Malloy 15
Jean Mattar 1
Eduardo Pacheco 28
John Simonis 21
Paul Spearin 19
Robert Surprenant 12

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

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Deacon Advocate

Jackie Collins - office@frpermanentdiaconate.com

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Pope Francis in his Eucharistic Adoration chapter of the book says “The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist has been a tenet of Christian Faith from the beginning. Because Catholics believe the consecrated Host is the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of



Jesus Christ, we also believe that it is worthy of adoration and praise. While the Eucharist is usually reserved in a tabernacle under lock and key, it is also publicly exposed in a monstrance or ostensorium for the purpose of prayer and devotion”.

When we returned from our trip to Ireland I couldn't wait to go to our spectacular Adoration Chapel and on my knees in front of the Monstrance, say my prayers of thanksgiving and to pray for that woman in Ireland.

In the book Pope Francis in his *Repose of the Eucharist* chapter, says “We know God's mighty works throughout history and the unsurpassed love with which he has saved us. We trust that his grace is at work here and now-in our times and in our lives”.

As Deacon's wives, even in these Pandemic times, I believe there are many ways we can still serve Jesus from the safety of our own homes. Writing a note to someone alone, calling a widowed Deacon's wife reminding her how important she still is to this community, bringing mail or the newspaper to the doorstep of a neighbor. Be the face of God to another person.

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.

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 position (Cape Cod Deaneries)



Deacons
Called
To Serve