

THE *Belleville Deacon*

OFFICE OF VOCATIONS | DIACONATE FORMATION | DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE



Bishop Michael McGovern

618-277-8181
bmcgovern@diobelle.org

Vicar General

Very Reverend Steven L. Beatty, V.G.
618-277-8181, Ext. 1061
sbeatty@diobelle.org

Director of Permanent Deacon Formation

Reverend Steven Pautler
Parish phone: 618-532-6291, Ext. 307
spautler@diobelle.org

Assistant Director of Permanent Deacon Formation

Reverend Michaelsami Arockiam
618-233-2391
misar5613@gmail.com

Coordinator of Deacons

Deacon Thomas J. Helfrich
618-722-5042
thelfrich@diobelle.org

Administrative Assistant Office of Vocations & Deacon Formation

Direct all correspondences to:
Mary Fournie at (618) 722-5052
mfournie@diobelle.org

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



Attended Preaching Conference (Left to Right) Deacon Tom Helfrich, Deacon Bill Mueller, Deacon Steve Kramer, Presenter, Associate Director of Homiletics. Deacon Corby Valentine, Deacon Arthur Hampton, Deacon Glenn Netemeyer, Deacon Wayne Wieler, Deacon Aspirant Tom Braun.



ANNUAL PREACHING CONFERENCE

Deacon Arthur L. Hampton
Holy Trinity & St. Stephen Parishes

*Ideas to Engage the Assembly:
Integrating Illustrations, Images,
and Icons.*

This year marks the sixth anniversary of the preaching conference held at Sacred Heart Seminary in Hales Corner. Deacon Glenn Netemeyer and I have had the privilege of attending all six conferences. The latest edition commenced with a session by Deacon Steve Kramer, Director of Homiletics at Sacred Heart, titled "The Word Choice of the Preacher Can Create Powerful Images." He emphasized the significance of word choice in homilies, encouraging language that evokes vivid, thoughtful images in listeners, allowing them to internalize the message and carry it into the world.

Deacon Kramer highlighted two impactful quotes: one from St. Benedict, "Listen to the word with the ears of the heart," and the other from St. Paul, "Look at the images with the eyes of the heart." He also advocated for the use of visual aids in preaching to enhance the congregation's engagement through both sight and sound. This theme of visual representation was recurrent among the speakers.

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.

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.

Rev. Stephen Garner, a UCC minister and self-described "Puritan Preacher," led a session titled "Upholding the Written Word of the Bible as a Source of Image." He described preachers as "Homiletic Artists," urging them to express their points succinctly, ideally in "eight words." He expressed caution in the use of images, similar to our traditional church adornments like stained glass windows and statues. His home church has clear windows to maintain a focus on viewing the world as it is.

The conference offered a multitude of insightful perspectives on utilizing images, both verbally and visually. Another notable session was led by Fr. Charles Brown, titled "St. Paul, Pastor of the Message, the Image, and the New Creation in Christ." Fr. Brown emphasized that preaching should be 'In cooperation with God.'

We had the opportunity to sit, dine, and discuss the conference and various aspects of diaconate life and ministry. I highly recommend this preaching conference as an excellent avenue for fulfilling continuing education requirements.



Are you being called to be a Permanent Deacon?

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 10:00 AM in the Undercroft of 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.

Important Dates

Deacon Formation for the Class of 2028

**Aspirancy Session
Evangelization & Ecumenism**
Deacon John McGregor
Saturday, February 10, 2024
Cathedral of St. Peter (Undercroft)
Time 8:30 - ?

**Aspirancy Session
Research & Writing in Formation**
Deacon John McGregor
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
Canonical Retreat - King's House at the Shrine
Saturday, August 10, 2024

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

Important Dates

**Belleville Deacon Community
Annual Deacon Retreat**
September 6 - 8, 2024
Kings House at the Shrine

Meeting with Bishop McGovern (Deacons only)
*Attire is deacon clerics (grey shirt, vest, rabat, etc.
with white tab and dark slacks).*

March 10, 2024 - 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
October 27, 2024 - 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Cathedral of St. Peter, Undercroft

**National Diaconate Institute
for Continuing Education (NDICE)
Annual Conference**
July 22nd - July 25, 2024
Holy Trinity Parish, Fairview Heights, IL
Being the Eucharist for All
<https://ndice.net/>

Deacon Formation 2024 - 2025

Date	Week	Topic
Sep-24	13-15	Church History
Oct-24	11-13	Church History
Nov-24	8-10	Intro to Scripture
Dec-24	13-15	Intro to Scripture
Jan-25	10-12	Spirituality
Feb-25	14-16	Fundamental Theology
Mar-25	14-16	Fundamental Theology
Apr-25	11-13	Old Testament
May-25	9-11	Old Testament

MESSAGE FROM THE COORDINATOR OF DEACONS

Deacon Thomas and Dawn Helfrich



Fiducia Supplicans ...

Hopefully you know what that is. You may have heard in the secular media in the past month or two that Pope Francis and the Vatican have approved the blessing of same sex marriages ... **NO!! WRONG!! NOT TRUE!!**

Here's what has really happened. On December 18 the Vatican, with the Popes approval, issued the Declaration *Fiducia Supplicans* - On the Pastoral Meaning of Blessings. In this Declaration the Vatican gives approval for blessings of couples in irregular situations and couples of the same sex.

What is a couple in an irregular situation? An example, divorced and remarried Catholics without an annulment. Here are a few highlights of this Declaration: the form of the blessing should not be fixed ritually; the request for a blessing by the individuals, should express and nurture their openness to the transcendence, mercy, and closeness to God; ordained ministers should perform these blessings spontaneously; this blessing should never be imparted in concurrence with the ceremonies of a civil union, and not even in connection with them; the blessing cannot be performed with any clothing, gestures, or words that are proper to a wedding.

Pope Francis recently responded to a question about blessing homosexual couples and he stated that the doctrine on the Sacrament of Marriage between a man and a woman has not changed, saying that people are blessed, not sin. In Deacon Tom's words, these are a blessing of the individuals who request it, not a blessing of their union. The Declaration is a relatively easy read, only 45 paragraphs long, this QR code or this link will take you to it.



<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pub-blico/2023/12/18/0901/01963.ht>

MESSAGE FROM THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Reverend Michaelsami Arockiam



Lent 2024 is fast approaching. It gives us an opportunity for all of us to learn the art of living with God the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit.

Our love for Jesus calls us to imitate him. Living personal life with his Father in one indivisible divine nature, the Son experiences and enjoys his personal life with his Father also in the human nature. To live this personal life with his Father in the human nature, the Son brings his soul and body to serve him in his life with his Father. In his personal life with his Father, his love for the Father makes him seek the Father's glory. Glory belongs to God alone.

Therefore, his love for the Father naturally alienates him for self glory or love of self, and thus naturally causes self abasement for the sake of neighbor. He brings his soul and body to serve him and thus bring glory to his Father: the glory of the Father is the salvation of humanity (and creation), the Son's neighbor. Therefore, he offers himself on the cross so that everyone of us receives the ability to bring soul and body to serve, rather than to distort, our life with the Father though such a life naturally causes the loss of "love of self" and abasement for the sake of neighbor. Jesus teaches us how we bring our soul and body to serve our life with the Father and assures us that God the Father will reward our soul and body with "eternal life in bodily resurrection" with which He rewarded him (the Son) for his personal life with Him in his human nature.

In other words, Jesus' soul and body received the reward for their services to the Son in his life with his Father, our human soul and body will receive the reward for their services to us in our life with his Father (also with His Son in the Spirit). In this Lent, let us listen to and follow Jesus closely. I wish you all a joyful and fruitful Lent. God bless.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Reverend Steven M. Pautler



I recently had the opportunity to take a brief vacation and traveled to the relatively warm state of Florida. This trip coincided with the major freeze we experienced a few weeks ago. On Sunday, I attended the 10:30 a.m. Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of Mary,

Queen of the Universe. Those who have visited this Basilica are aware of its grandeur and serene beauty. It was a rare pleasure to simply sit quietly among the congregation. I observed the actions of the celebrant and deacon. Despite the immense size of the Basilica and nearly full pews, they performed their holy duties with reverence and precision.

When I was ordained as a priest in 2018, I made a promise to God and to myself: "When attending a Mass where I preside, I aim to ensure that you feel better when you leave than when you arrived. If the faithful leave questioning why they spent an hour of their life here, I have failed."

That promise still holds true for me. Despite the chaos typical of the Orlando area, I left Mass feeling happy and renewed. God's presence was truly felt that day, making it a highlight of my vacation.

This is a sentiment that everyone, regardless of their walk of life, can embrace. It is particularly significant for priests, deacons, and those aspiring to these roles. It's easy to rush through a homily or not fully engage with the faithful, just to fulfill an obligation. As Lent approaches, it's a time to remind ourselves to let our passion for serving God's church inspire everyone we meet.

As I left the sacred space, I stepped into the nave and noticed a line of over twenty individuals waiting for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I joined the line and, after receiving absolution, asked the priest if the line was always this long. He replied, "Yes, every day, Sunday through Saturday." Driving back into the hustle of Orlando, I realized the importance of vacations for our mental and spiritual well-being. That hour spent away from my vacation was a profoundly meaningful time spent with God — mission accomplished.

