



Office of the Permanent Diaconate
The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington

February 2025

Welcome, Cardinal Robert W. McElroy, Archbishop-Elect of Washington



(Pictured above, Cardinal Robert W. McElroy will be installed as the eighth Archbishop of Washington on March 11, 2025, at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.)

The permanent diaconate community extends a warm and cordial welcome to Cardinal Robert W. McElroy, Archbishop-elect of Washington. On January 6, 2025, Pope Francis named Cardinal McElroy as the eighth Archbishop of Washington. Cardinal McElroy will succeed retiring Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory, who has faithfully served the People of God of this Archdiocese since 2019, and who plans to remain in Washington following his retirement.

Cardinal McElroy will be installed as the Archbishop of Washington on Tuesday, March 11 at 2:00 p.m. at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. All deacons and wives are cordially invited to attend, and will receive a written invitation to the Installation Mass with registration instructions.

Cardinal McElroy has served as the Bishop of San Diego since 2015. He was ordained a priest in the Archdiocese of San Francisco in 1980, and was ordained an Auxiliary Bishop of that Archdiocese in 2010. He was elevated to the College of Cardinals in 2022. Cardinal McElroy is a scholar of American history, political science and moral and pastoral theology. He is a member of the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life. He was very active in the recently concluded Synod on Synodality.

In his introductory press conference on January 6 at the Cathedral of Saint Matthew the Apostle, Cardinal McElroy stated, "For the past 85 years, the Catholic community has radiated the light of Christ throughout the District of Columbia and the surrounding five counties in Maryland. It has radiated Christ through the formation of rich parish communities of faith that make the Lord's presence known in the Eucharist, the Word of God and the sacramental life of the Church... The light of Christ radiates in the sacrifices of priests, deacons, and consecrated men and women who have continually offered their lives mixed with fragility and glory to serve God's people in every dimension. Similarly, the light of Christ has radiated in the Archdiocese's path-breaking development of lay ministries and apostolates, and the nurturing of lay leadership in the Church that is genuinely participative and inclusive."

Cardinal McElroy further indicated that as he forms a vision for leading the People of God of our Archdiocese the necessary elements will include, "The Gospel of Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Church; a pastoral perspective where truly love and truth can meet, a dedication to missionary discipleship, and a growing understanding of the real lives of the women and men and children and families, singles, priests and religious that form this vibrant community of faith." The *Catholic Standard* article introducing Cardinal McElroy can be found [by clicking here](#). The complete statement of Cardinal McElroy on the announcement of his appointment as Archbishop of Washington can be found [by clicking here](#).

We in the permanent diaconate community look forward to meeting Cardinal McElroy, and for his leadership of our Order as we rededicate our ministries to pastoral care of the People of God of our beloved parishes and Archdiocese.

Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory has led our Archdiocese and our Order since 2019 with wisdom, gentle yet firm guidance, and charitable pastoral care. In the introductory press conference held on January 6, 2025, Cardinal Gregory stated, "As I reflect upon the past nearly six years in this wonderful local Church of Washington, my heart is filled

predominantly with joy and gratitude for the many blessings, always appreciated but rarely deserved, that God has granted me."

The diaconate community expresses the sincerest gratitude for the leadership, mentorship, and fraternal love that Cardinal Gregory has shown to us these six years. We are also very grateful that Cardinal Gregory will remain in residence in our Archdiocese, so that we can continue to work with him as we serve the People of God of our beloved Archdiocese.

RCIA to OCIA -- What Deacons and Wives Need to Know: February 12



(Pictured above, Ms. Sara Blauvelt, ADW Secretary of Catechesis, will lead a workshop on the new OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults) on Wednesday, February 12, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in person at the Pastoral Center and virtually by Zoom).

Ms. Sara Blauvelt, ADW Secretary of Catechesis, will lead a presentation on the new OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults) which replaces the RCIA and important changes to the text and Rites that everyone in catechumenal ministry should consider.

The workshop will be held on Wednesday, February 12 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. both in person at the Pastoral Center and virtually by Zoom. For those participating in person, a light dinner will be served beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Please register for our workshop [by clicking here](#). Over 25 deacons and wives have already signed up for our discussion.

The Order of Christian Initiation remains familiar, but there are important changes. This workshop will provide an overview of what has changed and what has not changed. Specifically, we will address the more precise wording applied to those in the catechumenal process, as well as updated names for some Rites. We will also look at some of the ritual text to see how the text harmonizes with the Roman Missal. There will be ample time for 'questions and answers.'

Ms. Blauvelt serves as the Secretary for Catechesis for the Archdiocese of Washington. She has a Masters in Catechesis/Religious Education and 28 years of catechetical experience. She has supported the catechumenal ministry of parishes for the past 13 years.

Our discussion will equip deacons and wives with the insights and knowledge to use the new ritual text, which is mandatory beginning Ash Wednesday, March 5, 2025. (Two continuing formation credit hours.)

Lenten Day of Reflection for Deacons and Wives: March 8



(Pictured above, Bishop Evelio Menjivar, Auxiliary Bishop of Washington, will preside at Mass at our annual Lenten Day of Reflection for Deacons and Wives on Saturday, March 8, 2025 in Saint Ursula's Chapel at the Pastoral Center.)

The annual Lenten Day of Reflection for Deacons, Candidates and Wives will be held on Saturday, March 8, 2025 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Pastoral Center. Bishop Evelio Menjivar will be the Principal Celebrant and homilist at our Mass.

Please register for our Lenten Day of Reflection [by clicking here](#).

In this popular annual event, we prayerfully prepare ourselves as individuals and for our pastoral responsibilities during the Lenten season by participating in Mass together, reflecting upon a spiritual presentation, and taking the opportunity for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and receipt of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Luncheon will be served.

Over 110 deacons, candidates and wives came together for the Advent Day of Reflection in December, 2024, so please join us for a spiritual, meaningful day and share in the fraternity and sorority of the diaconate community as we make our Lenten spiritual preparations. (One continuing formation hour.)

Spring Retreat for Deacons and Wives: March 21-23



(Pictured above, Reverend Nicholas Dustin Blackwell, O. Carm., will be our Retreat Leader at the Spring Retreat for Deacons and Wives, March 21-23, 2025, at the Loyola Retreat House in Faulkner, Maryland.)

The Spring deacons and wives retreat will be held during the weekend of March 21-23 at the Loyola Retreat House in Faulkner, Maryland. Reverend Nicholas Dustin Blackwell, O. Carm., will be our Retreat Leader.

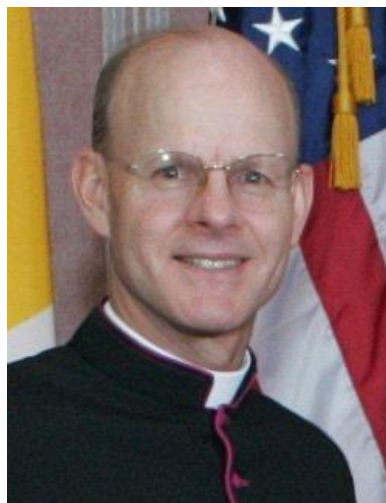
Please register for our Spring retreat [by clicking here.](#)

Father Blackwell grew up in Mayville, Michigan, a small rural town where he was raised as a hunter and fisherman by his family. After graduating from Northern Michigan University, he joined the Peace Corps and served in The Gambia, West Africa. During his service, he was injured, which eventually resulted in the amputation of his left leg.

Father Blackwell entered formation for the Saint Elias Province of the Carmelite Order in 2010, and was ordained a priest in 2017. During formation, he earned STB and MDiv. degrees from the Catholic University of America in 2016. He also earned his Licentiate in Canon Law (JCL) in 2023. He is currently studying for a Doctorate in Canon Law (JCD). He also works as a canonical advisor for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. He has taught canon law at the Dominican House of Studies. Father Blackwell was also a part time military chaplain at Joint Andrews Airforce Base for the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA in 2024.

Please plan to join brother deacons and sister deacon wives on a spiritually meaningful, prayerful, and collegial Spring retreat.

Blessings for Deacons Winter Workshop: Recap



(Pictured above, Monsignor Stephen J. Rossetti led our Winter Deacons and Wives virtual workshop on Blessings and Deacons on January 25.)

Over 60 deacons, candidates and wives joined in our first calendar 2025 ongoing formation workshop, with Monsignor Stephen J. Rossetti leading a virtual presentation on Blessings For Deacons on January 25.

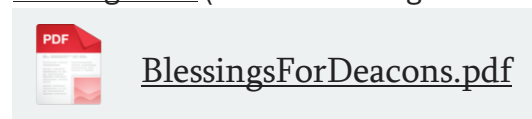
Monsignor Rossetti is a professor and nationally-known lecturer, and an expert on the topic of blessings, having recently written a book entitled *The Priestly Blessing -- Rediscovering the Gift* (Ave Maria Press, 2018).

Monsignor Rossetti provided a refresher on the basics of blessings by deacons, provided advanced insights on blessings, commented on various particular situations for blessings, including healing and deliverance ministry, and answered questions webinar participants had on deacons' blessings. He cited frequently to the *Book of Blessings* (Catholic Book Publishing, 1989).

During his presentation, Monsignor Rossetti emphasized several points, including that God is the source of blessings -- "The Blessed One" from whom all blessings come, and the vital importance of a blessing as a sacramental for the faithful. He also guided us as deacons to follow closely the allowances and the language of the *Book of Blessings*.

Deacon James Tittinger, ordination class of 2013, who ministers at Saint Joseph Parish, Pomfret, Maryland, accompanied Monsignor Rossetti and presented on the deacon's potential role in healing and deliverance ministry. Both Monsignor Rossetti and Deacon Jim expressed interest in following up with deacons who would like to learn more about this pastoral ministry.

The YouTube replay of Monsignor's excellent and topical presentation can be found [by clicking here](#). (Two continuing formation hours.) Presentation slides are set forth below:



We thank Monsignor Rossetti for his very meaningful instruction on blessings, and Deacon Jim for his helpful insights.

Permanent Diaconate Formation: Update



The ten candidates in formation for the ordination Class of 2025 are completing *Homiletics* and *Liturgy practica*, and will soon start the *Integrative Seminar* and *Christian Matrimony* courses, the latter with the Class of 2027. All ten men and four wives attended the Blessings virtual workshop held Saturday, January 25th in an assembled cohort, followed by fellowship and further discussions with Deacon Charles Huber, Assistant Director of Permanent Diaconate Formation, and some of their deacon-instructors that afternoon. They will participate in a workshop on the Exsultet in the near future.

The seven Candidates in formation for the ordination Class of 2027 started *Sacramental Theology* and the second New Testament course on *The Gospel and Letters of Saint John and the Epistles of Saint Paul*. They will have a workshop on the Roman Missal in February, building on their expanded *Liturgy I* course last semester.

The eight Aspirants in formation for candidacy in the Class of 2029 have had a few sessions on Saturdays, which continue through June of this year. They will learn more about Catholic Social Teaching, studying Sacred Scripture, the Catechism, multicultural ministry, and spirituality in the next few months, building on their presentations on the permanent diaconate's history, theology, liturgical and pastoral roles, as well as hearing from deacons on their experiences in parish and charitable ministry. This is the second cohort of aspirants to have a two year aspirancy followed by three years of candidacy. Presenters include priests, deacons, and Archdiocesan employees, and we are generously hosted by Saint Hugh of Grenoble Parish in Greenbelt, Maryland.

All aspirants and candidates are expected to be present at the Lenten Day of Reflection on Saturday, March 8, at the Pastoral Center, so it will be a good time for deacons and wives

to speak with them and get to know them better as we share prayer, spiritual enrichment, and fellowship as a diaconate community.

Permanent Diaconate Community 'Save the Dates'



Please 'save the dates' for the diaconate community events scheduled for the first half of 2025. These activities are designed to enrich our spiritual lives, enhance our pastoral capabilities and enjoy the fraternity and sorority of our diaconate community.

February 12, 2025, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.: RCIA to OCIA: What You Need to Know. Ms. Sara Blauvelt, ADW Secretary of Catechesis, will lead a presentation on the new OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults) and important changes to the text that everyone in catechumenal ministry should consider. Our discussion will equip deacons and wives with the basics to use the new ritual text, which is mandated beginning Ash Wednesday, March 5, 2025. This workshop will be offered both in person at the Pastoral Center and virtually by Zoom. Please see more detailed article and a registration link in this newsletter. (Two continuing formation credit hours.)

March 8, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.: Annual Lenten Day of Reflection For Deacons, Candidates and Wives. Bishop Evelio Menjivar will be the Principal Celebrant and homilist at our Mass during our Lenten Day of Reflection for Deacons, Candidates and Wives, held at the Pastoral Center. In this popular annual event, we will have the opportunity to worship together at Mass, listen to a spiritual reflection, and have time for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and confessions. Lunch will be served. Please see further details and a registration link in this newsletter. (One continuing formation credit hour.)

March 11, 2025, at 2:00 p.m.: Installation of Cardinal Robert W. McElroy as the eighth Archbishop of Washington, at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. All deacons and wives are very cordially invited to attend the Installation Mass for Cardinal Robert W. McElroy as the eighth Archbishop of Washington. Deacons will receive a written invitation and registration instructions for the Installation Mass. Further details are set forth in this newsletter.

March 21-23, 2025: Spring Deacons and Wives Retreat. The Spring deacons and wives retreat returns in 2025 at the Loyola Retreat House in Faulkner, Maryland. Reverend Nicholas Dustin Blackwell, O. Carm., will be our Retreat Leader. Father Blackwell is a nationally known spiritual advisor, and was also a part time military chaplain at Joint Andrews Airforce Base in 2024. Please see further details and a registration link in this newsletter.

May 17, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to Noon: Workshop on the Charitable Charism of the Josephite Order and the Permanent Diaconate. Our Spring continuing formation workshop for deacons and wives will focus on the charitable charism of the Josephite Order and the Permanent Diaconate. Following the reinstatement of the permanent diaconate after Vatican Council II, the Josephite Order led the formation program in our Archdiocese and other U.S. dioceses, and that Josephite commitment to charity continues ingrained in our permanent diaconate community. We will meet at St. Joseph's Seminary, 1200 Varnum Street, NE, tour the seminary and have a panel discussion with current Josephite formators and permanent deacons, including Deacon Joseph Curtis, Jr., who were directly connected to the first classes of permanent deacons in our Archdiocese. (Two continuing formation credit hours.)

June 7, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.: Anniversary Jubilarian Mass and Celebration Luncheon. Bishop Juan R. Esposito will be the Principal Celebrant and homilist at our Mass for the anniversary celebration of jubilarian deacons and their wives, to be held in Saint Ursula Chapel at the Pastoral Center. Several ordination classes will be honored, and a celebratory luncheon will be served. A personal invitation will be issued to all jubilarians, and all deacons and wives are invited and highly encouraged to join in this Mass and celebration.

June 28, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.: Permanent Diaconate Ordination for the Class of 2025. Cardinal Robert W. McElroy will preside at the ordination of those candidates called to Orders in 2025. Please plan on attending the ordination of our newest class of deacons, at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Deacons should bring

an alb, cincture, and white stole, and plan to arrive no later than 9:30 a.m. to vest. Wives of deacons will have reserved seating.

July 2025, Summer Reading and Virtual Discussion for Deacons and Wives: Our tradition of a summer reading selection for deacons and wives continues in Summer 2025. Our text will be *Remain in Me: Holy Orders, Prayer and Ministry* by Deacon James Keating (Paulist Press, 2019). Deacon Keating will lead us in a virtual discussion of this spiritual text in mid-July, date to be announced in a future newsletter. Deacon Keating is a nationally-known author, speaker and thought leader on the permanent diaconate. (Up to six continuing formation credit hours.)

Events for the second half of 2025 will be announced in a future newsletter. Special thanks to the members of the Continuing Formation Committee who have worked diligently to plan these activities. We know how quickly our ministerial, work and family calendars can fill up, so please 'Save the Dates' for these events aimed at enriching our spirituality, increasing our pastoral and liturgical skills, and deepening the fraternity and sorority of our ministry.

Reminder: 2024 Continuing Formation Worksheet due on February 21



(One of the highlights of the 2024 ongoing formation activities was Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory's dialogue with deacons and wives on the results of the Synod on Synodality, held at the Convocation for Deacons and Wives in November, 2024, at Saint Joseph Parish, Largo, Maryland. Pictured above, Cardinal Gregory presents with Deacon Steven Nash as moderator. The replay of this excellent dialogue for those who missed our convocation can be found [by clicking here.](#))

As set forth in the *Archdiocesan Policies and Guidelines for the Ministry of Permanent Deacons* (February, 2020), continuing formation is an ongoing, lifetime process and responsibility of every deacon, involving the development of the whole person -- spiritual, intellectual and emotional. The *Policies and Guidelines* provide that every permanent deacon incardinated in the Archdiocese, or in active ministry here, who has not attained the age of 75 years, engage in twelve hours of qualifying continuing formation activities each year.

Please note the following for calendar year 2024: (1) since this is the first year in which the ongoing formation requirements have been reinstated since the pandemic, compliance will be on a 'best efforts' basis; and (2) the annual compliance form should be filled out and returned to the Office of the Permanent Diaconate by February 21, 2025.

The majority of active deacons readily attain the twelve hour annual continuing formation requirement. For example, during calendar year 2024 the Office of the Permanent Diaconate sponsored workshops, conferences and activities that would result in 19 continuing formation hours.

When available, viewing replays of these activities counts towards the requirements. Also, workshops and lectures sponsored by the ADW, such as workshops offered by the ADW Office of Catechesis and lectures sponsored by the ADW Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach, will generally count towards this annual requirement. In addition, deacons have access to the Saint Luke Institute rich library of online workshops covering a wide number of meaningful topics.

Replays of 2024 continuing formation activities are attached below. The one-page reporting worksheet form for calendar year 2024 is also attached below, to be returned to Mrs. Karen Sachs (Sachs@adw.org) or Deacon Don Longano (longanod@adw.org):



[Deacon and Wives Continuing Formation Replays Available.2024](#)



[Deacon Continuing Formation Worksheet.2024](#)

Please contact Deacon Don Longano or Mrs. Karen Sachs if you have any questions or would like further information on our permanent diaconate continuing formation program.

Please Remember in Your Prayers

Please remember the following members of the Permanent Deacon community in your prayers this month.

Please inform Mrs. Karen Sachs if you would like to add someone to this prayer list in our next newsletter.



Mrs. Mary Caroline Graham, deceased, who along with her husband William (deceased) taught initial homiletics for many years in our permanent diaconate formation program.

Deacon John R. Barnes, ordination class of 1995, for prayers of healing.

Deacon Michael Bond, ordination class of 2006, for prayers of healing.

Deacon James L. Caldwell, Jr., ordination class of 2013, for prayers of healing.

Deacon Francisco Cartagena, ordination class of 2011, for prayers of healing.

Mrs. Carmen Cordova-Ferrer, wife of Deacon Nathaniel Cordova-Ferrer, ordination class of 1994, for prayers of healing.

Deacon Joseph Curtis, Jr., ordination class of 2002, for prayers of healing.

Deacon Willis C. Daniels, ordination class of 1995, for prayers of healing

Deacon Ronald Ealey, ordination class of 1975, and his wife Catherine, for prayers of healing.

Deacon Frank Enderle, ordination class of 1991, for prayers of healing.

Deacon Clark L. Glenn, ordination class of 2002, and his wife Doris, for prayers of healing.

Deacon Carlos Hernandez, ordination class of 2013, for prayers of healing.

Mrs. Megan Jackson, daughter of Deacon Alan Jeeves, ordination class of 2013, for prayers of healing.

Deacon James C. McCann, Jr., ordination class of 1991, for prayers of healing.

Deacon Lawrence Miles, ordination class of 1993, for prayers of healing.

Deacon John Montgomery, ordination class of 2008, for prayers of healing.

Deacon Andrew J. Nosacek, ordination class of 1993 and his wife Lorraine Ann, for prayers of healing.

Mrs. Maureen (Mo) Pagan, wife of Deacon Rafael Pagan, ordination class of 2013, for prayers of healing.

Mrs. Eleanor Ripple, wife of Deacon Ammon Ripple, ordination class of 2010, for prayers of healing.

Deacon John E. Robinson, Jr., ordination class of 2008, for prayers of healing.

Deacon Walter Rourke, ordination class of 1988, for prayers of healing.

Deacon Paul Ruffo, ordination class of 2000, for prayers of healing.

Deacon McBurnett (Mack) Smith, ordination class of 2004, for prayers of healing.

Deacon Robert (Bobby) White, ordination class of 1997, for prayers of healing.

Anjanette Young, daughter of Deacon Willis C. Daniels, ordination class of 1995, for prayers of healing.

Office of the Permanent Diaconate

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