

THE SERVANT



The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington
Office of the Permanent Diaconate



November 2025

Convocation for Deacons and Wives: Review



(Pictured above, Cardinal Robert W. McElroy, Archbishop of Washington, presents the homily at the Convocation for Deacons and Wives Mass held on October 25 at Saint Joseph Parish, Largo, Maryland. Very Reverend Anthony E. Lickteig is seated to the Cardinal's right. Photo by Andrew Biraj for the Catholic Standard).

Over 100 deacons, candidates and wives participated in the Convocation for Deacons and Wives led Cardinal Robert W. McElroy, Archbishop of Washington, on October 25 at Saint Joseph Parish, Largo, Maryland. Cardinal McElroy was Principal Celebrant and homilist at our convocation Mass, and following the Mass engaged in a dialogue with deacons and wives.

Concelebrants at our Mass included Most Reverend Roy E. Campbell, Jr., Auxiliary Bishop of Washington and Pastor of Saint Joseph Parish, Very Reverend Anthony E. Lickteig, Episcopal Vicar for Clergy and Secretary for Ministerial Leadership, Reverend Stephen Wong, Parochial Vicar at Saint Joseph Parish, and Reverend Thomas Robertson, Priest Secretary for Cardinal McElroy. Deacons serving at the Mass included Deacon Kyle Simon and Deacon Will Garcia. Deacon Steve Nash served as Master of Ceremonies. Yolanda Caraballo, wife of Deacon Carlo Caraballo, served as our lector.

In his homily, Cardinal McElroy offered his "profound thanks" for the ministry of permanent deacons in our Archdiocese. He invited us to recall the presence of Christ in our ordinations, and in our ministries. As deacons, Cardinal McElroy exhorted us that we are called to serve Jesus and His Church by offering hope to the poor, displaced, the lonely and the marginalized in our communities. He reminded us that the diaconate was initiated to provide charitable support so that no one is an outcast, no one is left behind.

Cardinal McElroy encouraged us by stating, "The call, and the grace that Christ gave you in that call, and the sacrifices you make means you are called to be the one who says, 'don't lose hope, don't give up.' " Cardinal McElroy further reminded us that in the ministry of deacons, "You are called to be a witness of hope and joy through your work, through your presence, through your sacrifice." He asked deacons "to be an image of Christ who emptied Himself. Be an image of Christ in a very powerful way to those who are lost."

The video replay of the Mass can be found [by clicking here](#), and the replay of Cardinal McElroy's homily can be found [by clicking here](#). The Catholic Standard article on the convocation Mass can be found [by clicking here](#).

Following the convocation Mass, Cardinal McElroy engaged in a very cordial, informative, and meaningful dialogue with deacons and wives. A wide range of issues of pertinence to the diaconate community and our ministries were discussed during our dialogue, for example, ministry to immigrants and the need for expanded diaconate service for Spanish speaking communities.

In the afternoon after a luncheon, the deacons and wives participated in two panel discussions focused on selected aspects of our ministries promoting Human Dignity, in particular, ministry to immigrants, to the sick, and to the imprisoned. A summary of these discussions is in a later article in this newsletter, set forth below. Following the afternoon discussion sessions, the participants ended the convocation by reciting the Divine Mercy Chaplet, led by Deacon Robert Villanueva and his wife Glicería Villanueva.

We in the diaconate community are very grateful for the wise and compassionate leadership of Cardinal McElroy as our Archbishop, and sincerely thank him for leading us in our annual Convocation. We look forward to Cardinal McElroy leading us at Mass at our upcoming Lenten Day of Reflection for Deacons and Wives, scheduled for Saturday, February 21, 2026.

Memorial Mass for Families of Deceased Deacons and Wives: November 15



All deacons and wives are cordially invited to join families of recently deceased deacons and wives in a Memorial Mass followed by luncheon on Saturday, November 15 beginning at 10:00 a.m. at the Archdiocese Pastoral Center.

There is still time to register to attend this Memorial Mass and luncheon, [by clicking here](#). Please register by November 7. Family members of the deceased have received invitations to this commemorative Mass by letter.

Most Reverend Juan R. Esposito, Auxiliary Bishop of Washington and Moderator of the Curia, will be the Principal Celebrant and homilist at our Memorial Mass. A number of deceased deacons and wives (who passed to the Lord beginning in the pandemic years) will be remembered and prayed for. A memorial luncheon will be served following the commemoration Mass.

Deacons and wives will be invited to participate and, in honor of our deceased brothers and sisters in the diaconate community, to assist in welcoming, accompanying, and serving the luncheon for the families of the deceased.

Advent Day of Reflection for Deacons and Wives: December 6



(Pictured above, Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory, Archbishop Emeritus of Washington, will lead our annual Advent Day of Reflection for Deacons and Wives, on Saturday, December 6 with Mass beginning at 10:00 a.m. at the Pastoral Center. Photo by the Catholic Standard).

Our Advent Day of Reflection for Deacons, Candidates and Wives will be held on Saturday, December 6, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Pastoral Center. Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory, Archbishop Emeritus of Washington, will be Principal Celebrant and homilist at our Mass, and will present the Advent spiritual reflection. Please register for our Advent Day of Reflection [by clicking here.](#)

In this popular annual event we will prayerfully prepare ourselves as individuals and for our pastoral responsibilities during the Advent season: we will participate in Mass together, reflect upon a spiritual presentation presented by Cardinal Gregory, and have the opportunity for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and receipt of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Luncheon will be served. (One continuing formation credit hour is available).

Please plan on joining us for our annual Advent Day of Reflection.

Permanent Diaconate Formation: Update



(Pictured above, candidates and wives with Bishop Juan R. Esposito following the Institution of Acolyte at the Mass held at St. Martin of Tours Parish, Gaithersburg, Maryland, on October 4: from left to right, (front row). Edwin and Ruth Hernandez, Hugo and Rita Castro, Miguel Tirado, Gerald and Michelle Cullens; (second row), Andrew Joseph, Chuck Johnson, Bishop Esposito, Lonnie Ellis and Ali Miller).

Seven candidates received the ministry of Instituted Acolyte, conferred by Most Reverend Juan R. Esposito, Auxiliary Bishop of Washington, on Saturday, October 4th, at the 5 pm Vigil Mass at Saint Martin of Tours Parish, Gaithersburg, Maryland.

Reverend David Wells, pastor of Saint Martin's Parish, concelebrated the Mass, and Deacon William Vita from Saint Martin's Parish served as Master of Ceremonies.

The newly instituted acolytes are: Mr. Hugo Castro (Rita) and Mr. Andrew Joseph (Susan), both from Saint Rose of Lima Parish, Gaithersburg, Maryland; Mr. Gerald Cullens (Michelle), from Jesus the Good Shepherd Parish in Owings, Maryland, who also serves as a Master of Ceremonies within the Archdiocese; Mr. Lonnie Ellis (Ali), from St. Gabriel's Parish in Washington, DC; Mr. Edwin Hernandez (Ruth), from Saint Mark's Parish in Hyattsville, Maryland; Mr. Charles "Chuck" Johnson (Maureen), from St. Mary's Parish, Piscataway, Maryland; and Mr. Miguel Tirado (Maria), from St. Martin's Parish. All seven had served at the diaconate ordination Mass on June 28th at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

These candidates in the potential ordination class of 2027 continue in courses for Christian Anthropology with Father Jaime Robledo, P.S.S., from Theological College, and Ecclesiology with Deacon William Ditewig. They will soon start Mariology with Reverend John Dillon, Pastor of Saint Francis of Assisi Parish, Derwood, Maryland.

The aspirants in the potential ordination class of 2029 continue in their first year of coursework, taking Church History with Reverend Rory Conley, Pastor of Saint Mary's Parish, Bryantown, Maryland, and Revelation with Dr. Joshua Benson, professor at the Catholic University of America. Several of the aspirants were able to attend the rite of acolyte, to witness what would be coming for them in a few years, if accepted as candidates in 2026.

Please note that our recruiting process for faithful men interested in learning more about our sacred Order continues throughout the year. Our 'Come and See' meetings for faithful men interested in discerning more about the permanent diaconate will begin after this Christmas season. Deacons are encouraged to work within their deaneries in this outreach, and coordinate with their representative on the Deacon Council. Please contact Deacon Charles Huber (Huberc@adw.org) for further information about the recruiting process for inquirers.

Please continue to pray for our new permanent deacons, candidates, aspirants, their wives, their formators, and inquirers discerning a vocation to our Order.

Commemorating Black Catholic History Month

**ON HOLY GROUND:
PILGRIMAGE OF REMEMBRANCE**

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2025

*“Take off your sandals, for the place where you
are standing is holy ground” - Exodus 3:5*

All deacons and wives are cordially invite to join the **Pilgrimage of Remembrance: On Holy Ground** to commemorate Black Catholic History Month on Saturday, November 15 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church and Cemetery, 16501 Annapolis Road, Bowie, Maryland 20715, sponsored by the Archdiocese Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach.

Participants will gather at 1:45 p.m. and begin our Cemetery Walk at 2:00 p.m. to honor and remember the enslaved people buried in unmarked graves. At 3:00 p.m., we will gather for a Circle of Remembrance to learn about the history and to listen to the voices of descendants of slavery, whose ancestors are buried in these sacred grounds.

Praise and worship will begin at 4:00 p.m., followed by Mass at 4:30 p.m. with Cardinal Robert W. McElroy as Principal Celebrant and Bishop Roy E. Campbell, Jr., as Concelebrant.

For additional information, please contact the OCDO at culturaldiversity@adw.org or (301) 853-5335. The informational flyer for this pilgrimage of remembrance can be found [by clicking here](#).

Please note that deacons and wives interested in participating in this commemoration will have sufficient time to join most of the activities following the Memorial Mass for Deceased Deacons and Wives being held earlier the same date.

Convocation Review: Discussions on Promoting Human Dignity



(Pictured above, deacons offer the Sign of Peace during Convocation for Deacons and Wives Mass on October 25, (left to right): Deacon John White, Deacon Brodie Wise, Deacon Robert Villanueva, Deacon Michael Brooks, and Deacon Darryl Kelley. Photo by Andrew Biraj for the Catholic Standard).

During the afternoon plenary sessions held at the recent Convocation for Deacons and Wives on October 25 at Saint Joseph Parish, Largo, Maryland, two panel presentations and discussions were held on the ministry of deacons and wives on selected issues promoting Human Dignity.

These panel discussions were moderated by Deacon Keith Somerville, who serves at Mount Calvary Parish, Washington, DC, and who is Chairman of the Deacon Council. The first panel discussed current issues in ministry to immigrants. Panelists included Deacon Patrick Brown, who serves at Saint Camillus Parish, Silver Spring, Maryland, and his wife Patricia Brown; and Mr. Juan Aznaran, Partnerships Manager, Newcomer Network, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington.

Several types of activities were discussed by panelists providing outreach to immigrants, including (1) participating in parish prayer vigils and Rosary services, (2) in homilies, preaching the importance of showing Christ's mercy to immigrants, (3) being present at Mass services to show support for immigrants in Churches with significant numbers of Spanish speaking parishioners, (4) providing guidance to immigrant families on contingency planning, (5) accompanying immigrants to meetings and court appearances, (6) assisting in efforts to provide financial assistance to immigrant families in need, and (7) numerous other volunteer assistance services that are needed at this time.

The members of the Deacon Council intend to follow up on this convocation discussion by compiling outreach activities being conducted throughout the Archdiocese, and recommending possible helpful charitable activities, for consideration by deacons, wives and parish volunteers, on this most pertinent topic of showing charity and mercy for our immigrant brothers and sisters.

At the Mass commemorating the 111th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, held in the Cathedral of Saint Matthew the Apostle on September 28, 2025, Cardinal McElroy emphasized in his homily that "Our first obligation as a Church is to embrace in a sustained, unwavering, prophetic and compassionate way the immigrants who are suffering so deeply because of the oppression they are facing ... A profound ministry of consolation, justice and support must be the hallmark of our spiritual and pastoral care at this moment ..." A copy of Cardinal McElroy's homily can be found [by clicking here](#).

Also of interest is a recent article published by the Associated Press recounting the challenges faced by the parishioners and clergy at Shrine of the Sacred Heart Parish, Washington, DC. The article can be found [by clicking here](#).

The second panel discussion focused on pastoral ministry to the sick and imprisoned. Panelists included Deacon Ed Baker, who serves at Saint Anthony Parish, North Beach, Maryland, Deacon Carlo Caraballo, who serves at Saint John Neumann Parish, Gaithersburg, Maryland, and Deacon T.J. Wynn, who serves at Saint Patrick's Parish, Washington, DC. Deacon Ed, who has dedicated his Ministry of Charity to hospice care, stressed the spiritual transformation flowing from pastoral care of the sick, bringing one to a closer union with Jesus, by sharing His message of compassion to the sick individual and to family members.

With respect to prison ministry, Deacon Carlo, who has provided pastoral outreach to prisoners for many years, stressed the importance of conveying Christ's unconditional love to those prisoners who are experiencing profound hopelessness. Deacon T.J., who is also active in prison ministry, specifically in assisting in periodic Kairos retreats for the imprisoned, stressed the guiding principal for prison ministry of "Listen -- Listen, Love -- Love" in pastoral outreach to prisoners. Both deacons discussed the spiritual rewards of engaging in these acts of mercy towards the imprisoned, who have such great need for outreach and offering of Christ's love.

We thank the panelists and our moderator who provided such deep, meaningful insights, and shared their pastoral experiences on these most pertinent aspects of Human Dignity with our convocation deacons and wives.

Pope Leo XIV Apostolic Exhortation: *Dilexi Te*



On October 4, 2025, Pope Leo XIV promulgated his first Apostolic Exhortation, *Dilexi Te* ("I Have Loved You"). In his writing, Pope Leo explores the prime importance of love and charity for the poor. Deacons can learn much from this teaching on Catholic Social Doctrine, and the exhortation will be very helpful both as we preach Christ's message of love and truth, and as we conduct our particular ministries of charity to those in need in our parishes and community.

Pope Leo encourages us in his writing, "Christian love breaks down every barrier, brings close to those who were distant, unites strangers, and reconciles enemies ... Through your work, your efforts to change unjust social structures or your simple, heartfelt gesture of closeness and support, the poor will come to realize that Jesus' words are addressed personally to each of them: "I have loved you" (Rev. 3:9)." (Par. 120-121).

Pope Leo explores many aspects of our deep commitment to the poor, in Christ's ministry on earth, His teaching, in Christian history and in today's world. Pope Leo states, "He [Christ] opens the eyes of the blind, heals lepers, raises the dead and proclaims the good news to the poor ... This explains why he proclaims: "Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God" (Lk. 6-20). God shows a preference for the poor: the Lord's words of hope and liberation are addressed first of all to them. Therefore, even in their poverty or weakness, no one should feel abandoned. And the Church, if she wants to be Christ's Church, must be a Church of the Beatitudes, one that makes room for the little ones and walks poor with the poor, a place where the poor have a privileged place (cf. Jas.2:2-4). (Par. 21).

In specific relation to the ministry of the deacon, Pope Leo writes, "Saint Paul recounts that among the faithful of the nascent Christian community not many were "wise according to the flesh, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth" (1 Cor. 1:26). However, despite their poverty, the early Christians were clearly aware of the necessity to care for

those who were most in need. Already at the dawn of Christianity, the Apostles laid their hands on seven men chosen from the community. To a certain extent, they integrated them into their own ministry, instituting them for the service — *diakonía* in Greek — of the poorest (cf. Acts 6:1-5)." (Par. 37).

A copy of Pope Leo's Apostolic Exhortation, *Dilexi Te*, can be found [by clicking here](#).

Cardinal Robert W. McElroy has commented on this Apostolic Exhortation: "Pope Leo illuminates the ties that call us to a deep affection for the poor and a profound sense of solidarity and action in the world to alleviate poverty and the structures that perpetuate it in the age in which we live." Cardinal McElroy's full statement on the exhortation can be found [by clicking here](#).

For Spring, 2026, the deacon continuing formation committee is discussing plans for a deacons and wives workshop to explore several aspects of this Apostolic Exhortation, particularly in relation to our ministries of charity and in conjunction with the services provided by Catholic Charities of our Archdiocese.

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, or if someone has recovered and should be removed from the prayer list.



Deacon Andrew J. Nosacek, deceased, ordination class of 1993.

Deacon John R. Barnes, ordination class of 1995, 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.

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

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

Mr. Matthew Datovech, son of Deacon James Datovech, ordination class of 2008, 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.

Mrs. Doris Glenn, widow of deceased deacon Clark L. Glenn, Sr., ordination class of 2002, 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.

Mrs. Marcia Mattocks, wife of the late Deacon Richard Mattocks, ordination class of 1993, 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 E. Montgomery, ordination class of 2008, for prayers of healing.

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

Mrs. Kathleen Scholz, wife of Deacon Nicholas Scholz, ordination class of 1994, for prayers of healing.

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

Deacon Trinidad Soc, ordination class of 2005, for prayers of healing.

Deacon Al Turner, ordination class of 2000, 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.

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