

THE SERVANT



The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington
Office of the Permanent Diaconate



December 2025

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](#). We currently have nearly 100 participants registered! Please register by 10:00 a.m. on December 1, so we can have an accurate count for our luncheon.

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 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 our diaconate community for this annual Advent Day of Reflection.

Annual Walk With Mary Procession and Mass: December 13



The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington cordially invites all deacons and wives to participate in the annual Walk with Mary procession and Mass to honor Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas, on Saturday, December 13, 2025.

The gathering for the procession will start at 11:00 am at the Shrine of the Sacred Heart (16th St. & Park Rd., NW), and the procession will conclude at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception (4th St. & Michigan Ave., NE). Following the praying of the Rosary at 1:00 pm, Mass at the Basilica will begin at 2:00 pm, with Cardinal Robert W. McElroy as the principal celebrant and Bishop Evelio Menjivar as the homilist.

Bishop Menjivar has issued a letter inviting deacons to participate in this procession and Mass (See below). For more information contact the Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach via email at culturaldiversity@adw.org. Click [here](#) to download the Walk with Mary event flier.



Letter to Deacons. 11.6.25_Bishop Menjivar

Memorial Mass for Families of Deceased Deacons and Wives: Review



(Pictured above, Most Reverend Juan R. Esposito (center) presides at Mass in Saint Ursula's Chapel at the Pastoral Center during the Memorial Mass for Recently Deceased Deacons and Wives on November 15. Also pictured (left to right), Monsignor Eddie L. Tolentino, Deacon Kenneth Angell, Deacon Stephen Robinson, Bishop Esposito, Deacon Keith Somerville, and Very Reverend Anthony E. Lickteig).

Over 70 family members, deacons and wives participated in the Memorial Mass and luncheon held for recently deceased deacons and wives on November 15. Most Reverend Juan R. Esposito, Auxiliary Bishop of Washington and Moderator of the Curia, was the Principal Celebrant and homilist at our Memorial Mass. Monsignor Eddie L. Tolentino, Pastor of Saint Michael the Archangel Parish, Silver Spring, Maryland, and Very Reverend Anthony E. Lickteig, Episcopal Vicar for Clergy and Secretary for Ministerial Leadership, concelebrated the Mass. Deacon Keith Somerville and Deacon Stephen Robinson were Deacons of the Mass, and Deacon Kenneth Angell served as Master of Ceremonies. Honorable Anne Healey, wife of Deacon Neal Conway, and Mrs. Son Vuong, wife of Deacon Mark Asselin, served as lectors at the Mass.

In his inspiring homily, Bishop Esposito thanked the family members of the deceased deacons and wives, and commemorated the deceased for serving as beacons of hope and spreading Christ's message of salvation in our parishes and community. He referred to Pope Leo's recent Apostolic Exhortation, *Dilexi Te*, as exemplifying the ministries of deacons and wives to reach out to the poor and the marginalized in society. He emphasized that the essence of the diaconate, expressed so well by the deceased deacons being commemorated, is charity: to assist in the great mission of the Church, drawing people to God, giving them hope; and that the deceased wives also supported and were dedicated to this charitable service.

The family members present received the spiritual support and prayers at the Mass, and the fraternity and sorority shown by all present at the accompanying luncheon. A number of deacons showed respect to the families by serving the luncheon, including Deacon Kenneth Angell, Deacon Robert Villanueva, Deacon Alton Davis, Jr., and Deacon Mark Asselin. A copy of the prayer card listing the deceased deacons and wives remembered and prayed for at the Mass is attached below.



2025 Memorial Prayer Card

Permanent Diaconate Formation: 'Come and See' Meetings



In mid-January through mid-March of 2026, we will be holding 'Come and See' discussion meetings all around the Archdiocese. When the schedule is finalized, it will be set forth in upcoming Servant newsletters, and also be available on the formation webpage. Information about these events and dates will be sent out to all parishes as well.

The locations for these Come and See meetings will include: Anacostia, Northeast DC, Bethesda, Burtonsville/Laurel, Clinton, Gaithersburg, Hyattsville, La Plata/ Waldorf, Largo, Leonardtown, Poolesville, Prince Frederick, Silver Spring, and Wheaton.

All deacons and wives are cordially invited to participate in these Come and See meetings. Once the schedule is distributed, please contact the diaconate formation office if you and/or your wife wish to attend one of these meetings, so that we can plan for your participation and ensure that we have deacons and wives at all of these meetings.

It is especially helpful to have wives of deacons at these meetings for answering questions and demonstrating to inquirers and wives the importance of the wife's inclusion, information, support, and consent.

Please review the [formation website](#) to familiarize yourself with the requirements and timeline, and encourage potential inquirers to do the same. The website will be updated before Christmas with the Come and See meeting schedule.

Honoring Those Who Were Enslaved: 'Do Justice, Love Goodness, and Walk Humbly'



(Pictured above, Bishop Roy E. Campbell, Jr., blessed the cemetery at Sacred Heart Parish, Bowie, Maryland, during the Black Catholic History Month commemoration on November 15, 2025). (Photo by Nicole Olea for the Catholic Standard).

Honoring Those Who Were Enslaved is a prayerful and pastoral initiative of The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington dedicated to recognizing and remembering the lives of the enslaved women, men and children whose labor and faith help to build the Catholic Church in Maryland. Many of these individuals are buried in Catholic cemeteries – some named and some in unmarked or largely forgotten graves. This initiative seeks to restore dignity to their memory, honor their humanity, and acknowledge the truth of our history with reverence and humility.

A Black History Month cemetery commemoration was held at the cemetery at Sacred Heart Parish, Bowie, Maryland, on November 15, 2025. Recent research has uncovered hundreds of unmarked graves in the parish cemetery of persons who were enslaved by the Jesuit Order who established the parish.

“We honor those Black Americans who died under the burden of slavery and are buried in unmarked graves,” said Bishop Roy E. Campbell Jr., “We are doing what is right and just to those who knew no justice during their lives.”

At the Mass following the commemoration at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Bishop Campbell was the Principal Celebrant, and Deacon Keith Somerville and Deacon Mike Greenfield assisted at the Mass.

There are a series of pastoral initiatives associated with this effort, including the following:

- Create two new ad-hoc advisory groups for communication and planning of future events;
- Create public-facing resources showcasing the Archdiocese's Black Catholic history and resources related to the Church;
- Regularly communicate with the descendant community through a quarterly email newsletter and periodic listening sessions;
- Provide access to Sacramental and other records to assist descendants in discovering their family history;
- Collect and organize all records related to historical cemeteries in the Archdiocese;
- Parish Outreach to communicate and implement the initiative;
- Provide a non-Church space for the descendant community; and
- Fund and support a public monument to commemorate contributions of enslaved peoples to the Catholic Church in Maryland.

The permanent diaconate community looks forward to actively joining and implementing this most important initiative. [Click here](#) to read the Catholic Standard article: "Archdiocese announces new initiative 'Honoring Those Who Were Enslaved.'" Please contact Wendi Williams, Executive Director of the Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach at williamsw@adv.org for further information.

Permanent Diaconate Community 'Save the Dates'



Please 'save the dates' for the diaconate community events scheduled for the remainder of this year and for the first half of calendar year 2026. These activities are designed to enrich our spiritual lives, enhance our pastoral capabilities and enjoy the fraternity and sorority of our diaconate community.

December 6, 2025 (10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Pastoral Center): Annual Advent Day of Reflection for Deacons and Wives. In this popular annual event we will prayerfully prepare ourselves as individuals and for our pastoral responsibilities during the Advent season. Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory, Archbishop Emeritus of Washington, will be the Principal Celebrant at our Mass and present a spiritual reflection. Please see additional details and the registration link in the separate article in this newsletter. (One continuing formation hour available).

December 13, 2025 (beginning 11:00 a.m.): Annual Walk With Mary Procession and Mass. All deacons and wives are cordially invited to participate in the annual Walk with Mary Procession and Mass. Please see additional details in the separate article in this newsletter.

January 24, 2026 (10:00 a.m. to Noon): Homiletics Workshop. Reverend Patrick A. Smith, Pastor, Saint Augustine Parish, Washington, DC, will be our presenter for our first calendar year 2026 ongoing formation workshop, a two hour presentation on giving meaningful and compelling homilies. Father Smith is a nationally-known speaker, preacher, revivalist, and retreat director. At this time, it is anticipated that this winter workshop will be offered by livestream, and further details and a registration link will be available in the January Servant newsletter. (Two continuing formation hours available).

February 21, 2026 (10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Pastoral Center): Annual Lenten Day of Reflection For Deacons and Wives. Cardinal Robert W. McElroy, Archbishop of Washington, will lead us in our annual Lenten Day of Reflection for Deacons and Wives. During our Lenten Day of Reflection, we will 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. Lunch will be served. Further details and a registration link will be provided in the January Servant newsletter. (One continuing formation hour available).

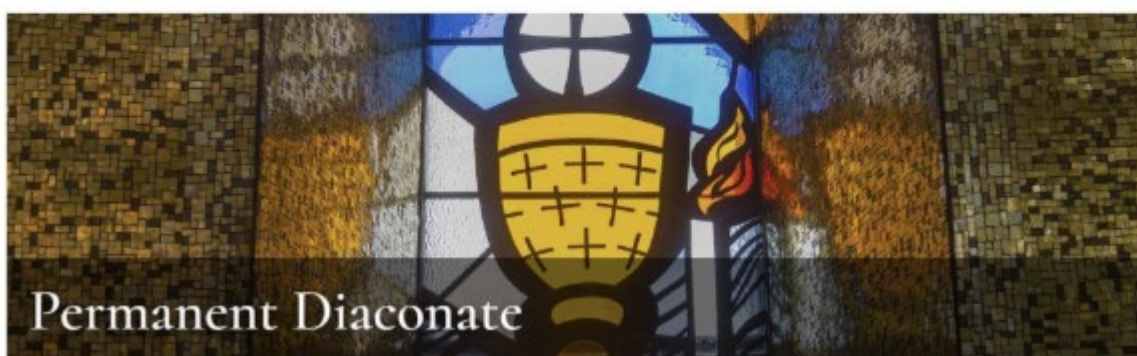
March 14, 2026 (10:00 a.m. to Noon at the Pastoral Center): Two Concurrent Workshops: Workshop For Deacons Nearing/Attaining Retirement Age and Workshop for Newly Ordained Deacons. Our series of ongoing formation workshops continues with two concurrent sessions: one workshop discussion designed for deacons who are nearing or have attained retirement age, and focused on the practical and spiritual aspects of continued ministry; and one workshop discussion for newly ordained deacons (ordination classes of 2021 and following) on the joys and challenges of ministry. Both groups will join for lunch at Noon following the workshop discussions. Further information will be provided in a future Servant newsletter. (Two continuing formation hours available).

May 16, 2026 - (10:00 a.m. to Noon at the Pastoral Center): Workshop on the Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi Te* and our Diaconate Mission to Charity. Deacons are configured to spread Christ's message of Love and Truth through acts of charity in our parishes and communities. Pope Leo in his recent Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi Te* details many of the particular Ministries of Charity focused on by deacons, and as expressed in scripture in Matthew 25:31-45. Our Spring workshop will explore our diaconal commitment to charity in practical application, and incorporate our working with Catholic Charities and other Archdiocesan and parish based organizations. Deacon Jim Shanahan, who has worked at Catholic Charities for nearly a decade in parish partner and other assistance programs will moderate our panel discussion. (Two continuing formation hours available).

June 27, 2026 (10:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.): Deacon Jubilee Mass and Luncheon, and Rite of Candidacy. Bishop Roy E. Campbell, Jr., will be Principal Celebrant at our annual Jubilarian Mass and Luncheon celebration. Several classes of jubilee deacons will be honored. In addition, aspirants in the potential ordination class of 2029, as selected by Cardinal Robert W. McElroy, will be admitted as candidates in the Rite of Candidacy. A celebratory luncheon will be held following the Mass.

Please note that diaconate community activities for the remainder of calendar year 2026 will be listed in a future Servant 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: Annual Ongoing Formation Worksheet for 2025



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.

The one-page reporting worksheet form for calendar year 2025, to be returned to the Office of the Permanent Diaconate by February 17, 2026, can be found by [clicking here](#). It can also be found on the Permanent Diaconate page in the Clergy Only section of the ADW website.

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

When available, viewing replays of these activities count towards the requirements. Please visit the [Permanent Diaconate page](#) in the Clergy Only section of the ADW website for links to replays. Please contact Mrs. Karen Sachs if you need the password for this website page.

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 on-line workshops covering a wide number of meaningful topics. Included in the available replays of diaconate workshops is the September 2023 Workshop on Mental Wellness presented by professionals from the Saint Luke Institute. If you would like to review this pertinent workshop, please [click here](#).

Thanksgiving and Advent Blessings!



Best wishes for a Peaceful Thanksgiving and a Blessed Advent Season, from your Office of the Permanent Diaconate team: Very Reverend Anthony E. Lickteig, Deacon Charles Huber, Deacon Don Longano, and Mrs. Karen Sachs.

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.



Mrs. Wilda Raffensperger, deceased, wife of the late Deacon H. Jeffrey Raffensperger, ordination class of 1983.

His Eminence, Robert Cardinal McElroy, for prayers of healing.

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.

Mrs. Michelle Cullens, wife of candidate Gerald Cullens, 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.

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.

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

Deacon Walter Rourke, ordination class of 1988, 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.

Office of the Permanent Diaconate

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