

THE SERVANT

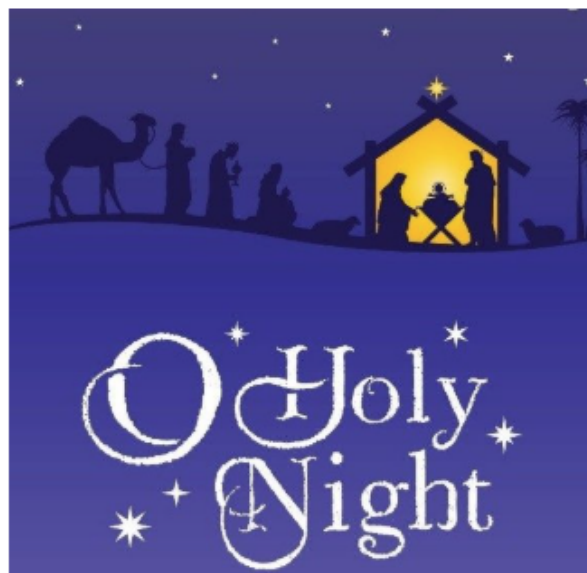


The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington
Office of the Permanent Diaconate



January 2026

**Best Wishes for a Joyous Christmas
Season and a Peaceful New Year!**



Best wishes to you and your family for a prayerful Advent, a Joyous Christmas Season and a Peaceful New Year! From your Office of the Permanent Diaconate team: Very Reverend Anthony E. Lickteig, Deacon Charles Huber, Deacon Don Longano and Mrs. Karen Sachs.

We look forward to participating with you in a number of spiritual, ongoing formation, and social activities in the New Year!

Homiletics Workshop:

January 24, 2026



(Pictured above, Father Patrick Smith, Pastor, Saint Augustine Parish, Washington, DC, will lead us in our homiletics workshop on January 24, 2026).

Our ongoing formation workshop series in 2026 will begin with Reverend Patrick A. Smith, Pastor, Saint Augustine Parish, Washington, DC, as our presenter on giving meaningful and compelling homilies. The workshop will be held on Saturday, January 24, 2026, at the Pastoral Center from 10:00 a.m. to Noon, followed by informal discussion at lunch. A virtual livestream option will also be offered for participants who have relocated or are otherwise unable to attend in-person.

Please [click here to register](#) for our homiletics workshop.

Father Smith is a nationally-known speaker, preacher, revivalist, and retreat director. He studied at Mount Saint Mary's College, majoring in Theology. He then attended seminary at the North American College in Rome, where he earned both a B.A. in Sacred Theology and a Licentiate in Sacred Theology. In 1990, he was ordained to the priesthood at Saint Matthew's Cathedral in Washington, DC. Since 2004, Father Smith has served at the historic Saint Augustine Catholic Church in Washington, DC.

We look forward to Father Smith's counsel and insights into giving enriching homilies. (Two continuing formation hours available).

Lenten Day of Reflection for Deacons and Wives: February 21, 2026



(Pictured above, Cardinal Robert W. McElroy presents the homily at the Convocation of Deacons and Wives Mass on October 25, 2025 at Saint Joseph Parish, Largo, Maryland).

The annual Lenten Day of Reflection for Deacons, Candidates and Wives will be held on Saturday, February 21, 2026 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Pastoral Center. Cardinal Robert W. McElroy, Archbishop of Washington, will be the Principal Celebrant and homilist at our Mass.

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

At this popular annual event, 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. Luncheon will be served.

Over 110 deacons, candidates and wives came together for the Advent Day of Reflection in December, 2025, so please plan on joining 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.)

Permanent Diaconate Formation: 'Come and See' Meetings



(Pictured above, candidates and wives on retreat at Priest Field Pastoral Center in West Virginia, where the annual formation retreats are held before the start of classes. The inquirers invited into formation after the Come and See meetings start aspirancy with a retreat, and they and their wives, if married, make an annual retreat as an integral part of formation, building community as they strengthen their relationship with God).

The following update on permanent diaconate formation and the 'Come and See' meeting process is provided by Deacon Charles Huber, Assistant Director of Permanent Diaconate Formation:

“Dear Brothers & Sisters, Our biennial Come & See meetings will be starting in mid-January and running into early March. So far we have 14 parishes that will be hosting these meetings. Please look at the flyer attached below for details. We ask you to talk with your pastor about having that flyer posted at the parish, and about announcements in the bulletin and at Mass when a nearby Come & See meeting is coming up.

Please also talk with your deacon council representative about communicating with the pastors of parishes in your deanery that do not have a deacon, to help publicize these meetings. The flyer has a QR Code where inquirers can register to attend these meetings, and that registration link is also on our [formation webpage](#).

Please refer inquirers to the meetings and our formation webpage, and please take a good look at it as well, to help those discerning. There is a link for deacons and wives to register for these meetings as well. Registration of inquirers, deacons, and wives helps us plan for numbers attending and to communicate if any changes in location or date occur. [Please click here to register](#).

I also wish to bring to your attention some changes in formation requirements. Most relevant is the lowering of the maximum age at ordination, from 65 to 60 years old. Going forward, including for all future inquirers, this means that men will need to be accepted into the five year formation program by age 55. Those men currently in formation are allowed to continue even if they would be older than 60 at prospective ordination.

This was communicated to the Deacon Council at the December meeting of the Council, so you can talk with either myself, Deacon Don, or your deacon deanery representative about the specifics. The 'Selection Procedures and Timeline' that is linked on the formation webpage has more details and is important for inquirers and for those talking with inquirers, such as yourselves, to read.

I also wish to point out that we are increasing the numbers of bilingual Come & See meetings in English & Spanish. While any man entering formation should be comfortable in both spoken and written English, having deacons who can communicate and minister in other languages is most helpful for our Church.

As we have not had a Spanish-language formation program since 2011, it is important to help men who would need to work on their English-language skills. Having bilingual deacons and wives attend these Come and See meetings to show support and advise these inquirers would be helpful. Also, inquirers and wives can improve their English speaking and written abilities with the Catholic Charities ESOL program in Gaithersburg, community college coursework, or other resources.

While men up to age of 60 can currently be ordained, we should also remember that our Order is a vocation that integrates our family, work, and ministry as workers in the marketplace, and that we have had several deacons recently ordained with young children, and so we should be encouraging and supportive of those in new families, though they must be married in the Catholic Church for at least five years at entry into formation. The example to our parishes and our community of deacons with young children can help transform our society.

We also have had several unmarried men be ordained, whether never-married, widowed, or with a previous marriage being declared null or lack of canonical form. Such men should be living a celibate life for some time, with the expectation to do so going forward, to make that vow of perpetual celibacy at ordination."

Set forth below is a list of currently scheduled **Come and See** meetings:

Saturday, January 17, 2026, 6:30 pm, Saint John the Evangelist Parish, Clinton (*English & Spanish*).

Tuesday, January 20, 2026, 7 to 9 pm, Saint Aloysius Parish, Leonardtown.

Thursday, January 22, 2026, 7-8:30 pm, Saint Camillus Parish, Silver Spring (*English & Spanish*).

Sunday, January 25, 2026, 12 pm, after 10:45 am Mass Saint John Vianney Parish, Prince Frederick.

Tuesday, January 27, 2026, 7 to 9 pm, Saint John the Evangelist Parish, Silver Spring.

Wednesday, February 4, 2026, 7 to 9 pm, Saint Joseph Parish, Largo.

Thursday, February 5, 2026, 7 to 9 pm, Holy Redeemer Parish, Northwest DC.

Sunday, February 8, 2026, after 10 am Mass, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Southeast DC.

Thursday, February 12, 2026, 7 to 9 pm, Saint Mary, Piscataway Parish.

Friday, February 20, 2026, 7 to 9 pm, Our Lady of the Visitation Parish, Darnestown.

Sunday, February 22, 2026, after 12 pm Mass, Saint Mark the Evangelist Parish, Hyattsville (*English & Spanish*).

Monday, February 23, 2026, 7 to 9 pm, Saint Martin of Tours Parish, Gaithersburg (*English & Spanish*).

Saturday, February 28, 2026, after 5 pm Mass, Sacred Heart Parish, La Plata.

Saturday, March 7, 2026, after 4pm Mass, Resurrection Parish, Burtonsville



Come and See Meetings Flyer

Advent Day of Reflection for Deacons and Wives: Review



(Pictured above, Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory, Archbishop Emeritus of Washington, presides at Mass at our annual Advent Day of Reflection for Deacons and Wives held on December 6 with Mass at the Pastoral Center. Accompanying Cardinal Gregory are, left to right: Very Reverend Anthony E. Lickteig, Concelebrant, Deacon Oscar Mendez, Father Joseph Murphy, Concelebrant, Monsignor Joseph Ranieri, Concelebrant, and Deacon Emmanuel Abongwa).

Over 110 deacons, candidates and wives participated in our Advent Day of Reflection for Deacons, Candidates and Wives held on December 6 at the Pastoral Center. Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory, Archbishop Emeritus of Washington, was the Principal Celebrant at our Mass, and presented the Advent spiritual reflection.

In his very meaningful spiritual reflection, Cardinal Gregory emphasized that from the very institution of the diaconate by the Apostles (Acts 6:1-7) deacons have been configured to charity. Following the example of Saint Lawrence, deacons are focused on the needs of the poor as the treasure of the Church. Cardinal Gregory noted that at Mass, deacons offer the Prayer of the Faithful, as deacons are knowledgeable of the needs of the community in charity. Also, Cardinal Gregory emphasized the courage of deacons, as exemplified by Saint Stephen giving up his life for the Faith. Thus, the diaconal ministry springs from charity. And, Cardinal Gregory challenged us as deacons to ask ourselves as we prepare to assist at Mass -- 'have I done the acts in service to charity that allow me to put on the dalmatic?'

Cardinal Gregory further reminded deacons of the charge received at our ordination, as the Archbishop places the Book of the Gospels in the hands of the newly ordained, saying, "Receive the Gospel of Christ whose herald you have become. Believe what you read, teach what you believe, and practice what you teach." Cardinal Gregory noted that deacons live the Gospel by caring for those in need who look for hope.

Our Advent Day of Reflection also provided participants time for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and receipt of the grace of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Deacons, candidates and wives also enjoyed time for fraternity and sorority at the luncheon.

Special thanks to Cardinal Gregory for leading our Advent Day of Reflection, and to the Concelebrants at our Mass: Very Reverend Anthony Lickteig, Monsignor Joseph Ranieri and Father Joseph Murphy. Thanks also to the deacons of the Mass, Deacon Oscar Mendez and Deacon Emmanuel Abongwa; Deacon James Summers who served as Master of Ceremonies, Deacon Matthew Konieczny who led us in the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction; and to Mae Avenilla, wife of Deacon Frank Avenilla, who served as lector at our Mass

Commemorating the Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



All parishes in the Archdiocese are encouraged to commemorate the legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in observance of the January 19, 2026, national holiday.

The Church and the Dream: Building Peace Through Justice has been selected as the theme for the archdiocesan Mass which will be held on Sunday, January 18, 2026, at 10:30 a.m. at the Shrine of Saint Jude Thaddeus Catholic Church, 12701 Veirs Mill Rd, Rockville, MD 20853, with Cardinal Robert W. McElroy as the Principal Celebrant. All deacons and wives are cordially invited to attend this Mass.

For more information about the archdiocesan Mass, or for those parishes in need of support with parish liturgy planning, please contact Wendi Williams in the Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach at williamsw@adw.org or 301-853-4468.

Permanent Diaconate Community

'Save the Dates'



Please 'save the dates' for the diaconate community events scheduled 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.

January 24, 2026 (10:00 a.m. to Noon at the Pastoral Center and by live stream): 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. Please see the separate article with further information in this newsletter. (Two continuing formation hours available). [Click here to register.](#)

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 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. Please see further details in the separate article in this newsletter. (One continuing formation hour available). [Click here to register.](#)

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 the February 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 second half 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, in calendar year 2025 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](#).

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 Lawrence Alphonsus Miles, deceased, ordination class of 1993.

Mr. Augustus (Gus) John Mitchell III, deceased, father of Deacon Stephen Mitchell, ordination class of 2006.

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 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.

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.

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