

THE SERVANT



The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington
Office of the Permanent Diaconate



February 2026

Archdiocese Sets Goals for Pastoral Action



(Pictured above, Cardinal Robert W. McElroy presides at Mass during the Convocation for Deacons and Wives, held in October, 2025 at Saint Joseph Parish, Largo, Maryland).

During his first year as our Archbishop, Cardinal Robert W. McElroy's consultation with lay leaders from our parishes and with the guidance of priests has resulted in six goals for pastoral action in our parishes and Archdiocese for the next five years.

In his Report to the People of God: Consultation and Pastoral Planning for the Archdiocese of Washington (January, 2026), Cardinal McElroy relates that over a period of seven months last year he consulted with more than 400 parish lay leaders representing parishes

throughout our Archdiocese in synodal dialogue to assess "... how our local church ... could grow in faith and witness to the Lord Jesus Christ." (Report).

Further, during the priest convocation held in November, a summary of these discussions was reflected upon, and with the priests' pastoral insights and experience, six goals for the pastoral work of our Archdiocese for the next five years were prioritized and delineated, as follows:

1. Foster a Parish Culture which Piercingly Invites People to a Personal Encounter with Jesus Christ.
2. Provide Formation which Deepens the Sacramental Life of the Church.
3. Celebrate and Evangelize Marriage and Family Life.
4. Formation of the Laity as Missionary Disciples.
5. Care for the Vulnerable: Migrants, the Unborn and the Marginalized.
6. Reverse the Avalanche of Young People Leaving the Church.

As Cardinal McElroy concluded in his Report, "I think that these six goals are excellent guideposts for action and pastoral development at this moment in the life of the Church, and I enthusiastically look forward to working with all of you to attain them."

We in the permanent diaconate community are excited to assist in the implementation of these Archdiocese goals, and the specific initiatives that will derive from these goals within our parish communities. The sacramental configuration of the deacon in pastoral service to the People of God of our Archdiocese, in obedience to and in fraternity with our Archbishop, and under the fraternal direction of our pastors, deacons are committed to the objectives of these Archdiocese goals. Many deacons' wives are also very active in parish ministry and outreach to the community.

Along with the parish appointment for the deacon upon his ordination, the Archbishop also assigns each deacon a particular Ministry of Charity. These ministries are based in parish and community outreach, and many are acts of charity listed in Matthew 25:31-45 (ministry to the poor, the hungry, the needy, the stranger and the prisoner). In addition, deacons are ordained to the three-part ministries of Charity, Liturgy and Word, which will enable deacons to be of great assistance in the implementation of these six pastoral goals for our Archdiocese, in a wide range of ministries involving liturgy, formation, invitation, charitable outreach to the vulnerable, the migrant and those in need, witness to the Sacrament of Marriage, and outreach to youth.

Deacons and wives very much look forward to assisting in the implementation of these pastoral goals, inviting our parishioners and members of our community to a closer friendship and loving relationship with Christ.

Cardinal McElroy's Report on Consultation and Pastoral Planning for the Archdiocese can be found [by clicking here](#). A summary of Cardinal McElroy's Consultation with the Lay Leaders of the Parishes of our Archdiocese can be found [by clicking here](#). Cardinal McElroy's interview by the Catholic Standard on January 15, 2026 relating to this Archdiocese pastoral initiative can be found [by clicking here](#).

Lenten Day of Reflection for Deacons and Wives: February 21



(Pictured above, Very Reverend Anthony Lickteig, ADW Episcopal Vicar for Clergy and Secretary for Ministerial Leadership, will lead our annual Lenten Day of Reflection for Deacons and Wives on February 21).

Our 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.

Very Reverend Anthony E. Lickteig, Episcopal Vicar for Clergy and Secretary for Ministerial Leadership, will be our Principal Celebrant and homilist at the Mass, and will present our Lenten spiritual reflection.

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 grace of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Luncheon will be served.

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 season 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' meeting process 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:

Some of the recent 'Come and See' meetings have had a slight setback with the snowstorm, cancelling several. We already have held three meetings. The remaining schedule for the 'Come and See' meetings is the following:

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.

Tuesday, February 17, 2026, 7 to 9 pm, St. John the Evangelist Parish, Silver Spring.

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.

Tuesday, March 3, 2026, 7 to 9 pm, Incarnation, Northeast DC.

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

Sunday, March 8, 2026, after 10:45am Mass, Saint John Vianney Parish, Prince Frederick

Friday, March 13, 2026, 7 to 9 pm, St. Jerome Parish, Hyattsville.

Several younger men with children in school (or younger) have participated in these meetings, and a few also speak Spanish. A few also attend parishes in or near the District of Columbia.

We also have had inquirers who are recently married, and so will have to wait until eligible. In the interim, while I keep in touch with inquirers who have to wait, I also encourage them to form mentoring relationships, which can be a good way to work on the typical issues of prayer, sacraments, and of course liturgical service. Many of the inquirers these in recent years need to work on one or more of these.

Married inquirers need to have a previous marriage annulled, same if their wife had a previous marriage, and all married inquirers should be validly married in the Catholic Church at least five years prior to application. Unmarried inquirers should be committed to living a celibate life, have a history of stable, healthy, adult relationships, and be living celibate chastity for a significant time as an adult before application. Single men who were previously married would need an annulment, widowed men would need to wait at least three years after the unfortunate death of their wife, and both would need to demonstrate that any minor-age or dependent children are being taken care of.

In terms of prayer life, frequent attendance at daily Mass is helpful, as is a stability in personal prayer. Deacon James Keating talks a lot about this in his writings.

Also, some men are hesitant to engage in liturgical ministry, so please encourage them to sign up as readers and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion as part of their discernment. If one doesn't feel comfortable bringing someone the Eucharist or proclaiming Sacred Scripture, that is not something easily 'fixed' in formation.

The Come and See meetings will end in mid-March, and the Deacon Council will be briefed on the status of the enquirer process in its March meeting.

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](#).



Come-and-See-2026 Permanent-Diaconate-Flyer.pdf

Workshop for Deacons and Wives Nearing/at Retirement: March 14



SAINT LUKE INSTITUTE

A workshop discussion for deacons and wives who are nearing retirement from secular work, or contemplating reduction in ministry, or are beginning to plan for those life changes, will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on Saturday, March 14 at the Pastoral Center. Optional morning prayer will be recited at 9:45 a.m. Lunch will be served following the discussion. This workshop discussion will be held both in-person and by livestream. Our discussion will be facilitated by Dr. Stephen T. Carroll, Clinical Staff, Saint Luke Institute.

Please [click here to register](#).

Deacons (and wives) planning for or at retirement from secular work, or contemplating reduction in ministerial activities, face diverse challenges, and our workshop will provide an overview of issues to be considered in ministry, including warning signs of burnout and vicarious trauma that can arise in parish ministry, and strategies for setting healthy boundaries for self-care. Deacons have unique challenges in ministry of balancing pastoral and family needs. The workshop will offer strategies for improving communication with pastors and other supervisors, and clarifying expectations for balance between pastoral and family responsibilities.

Our workshop discussion will be facilitated by Dr. Stephen T. Carroll, Clinical Staff, St. Luke Institute. Dr. Carroll has been a member of the clinical services department at the Institute since 2012 and now serves as Director of Education and Aftercare Services. He received his doctoral degree in counseling from Loyola University in Maryland, and a master's degree in pastoral ministry from Boston College. He has extensive experience in counseling with individuals, families, veterans, and people in ministry for the last thirty years.

Please join us for this most pertinent discussion for deacons and wives nearing, at, or planning for retirement and its commensurate impact on ministry. (Two continuing formation credit hours available).

Workshops for Newly-Ordained Deacons and Their Wives: March 14



(Pictured above, Most Reverend Roy E. Campbell, Jr., Auxiliary Bishop of Washington, and the ordination class of 2025 following ordination on June 28, 2025 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC).

Workshop discussions for newly-ordained deacons and their wives will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 12 Noon on Saturday, March 14 at the Pastoral Center. Optional Morning Prayer will be recited at 9:45 a.m. Lunch will be served following the discussion. These workshop discussions are designed for deacons ordained in the Classes of 2021, 2023, and 2025, and their wives. Separate discussions will be held for deacons and for wives, with deacons and wives acting as facilitators. The discussions will focus on the joys and challenges of ministry, and offer a forum for open and meaningful dialogue for those who are beginning and maturing in their ministry. The workshop is designed to begin an ongoing periodic dialogue for recently-ordained deacons and their wives as they adjust to ministerial life, and balance work, family, and ministerial responsibilities.

Please [click here to register](#).

Deacons in the ordination classes of 2021, 2023, and 2025 are highly encouraged to participate in these meaningful and lively discussions. (Two continuing formation credit hours available).

Homiletics Workshop: Review



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

Over sixty deacons, candidates and wives participated either in-person or by livestream in our homiletics workshop led by Reverend Patrick A. Smith, Pastor, Saint Augustine Parish, Washington, DC, on January 24. Father Smith presented a very meaningful, engaging, and lively workshop on giving meaningful and impactful homilies.

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.

In his presentation slides, entitled 'Just Say the Word', Father Smith exhorted us by quoting the Prologue of the Gospel of John, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (John 1:1). Father Smith emphasized the essential practices of prayer and study in forming a homily, and gave practical tips for preparation and delivery. He urged focus on the key message of the readings of the day, asking 'What does God want to say to His people this Sunday?'

Father Smith further emphasized the importance of the relevance of the message in the homily to the congregation's life and circumstances, to move the hearer (and the preacher) to take positive spiritual actions. With respect to practical presentation tips, he suggested the following: (1) start strong; (2) end strong; (3) have one clear message; and (4) be true to the text.

We are grateful for Father Smith's mentoring and guidance on giving impactful, meaningful homilies, and for his uplifting, vibrant and very meaningful workshop presentation.

For those deacons and wives who had conflicts and missed the workshop presentation, the recording can be found [by clicking here](#).

Father Smith's excellent presentation slides are set forth below:



ADW Homiletics Workshop - 1-24-26.pdf

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.

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. Very Reverend Anthony E. Lickteig 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): Workshop For Deacons and Wives Nearing/Attaining Retirement Age. Our series of ongoing formation workshops continues with a discussion designed for deacons and wives who are nearing or have attained retirement age, and focused on the practical and spiritual aspects of continued ministry. Our discussion will be facilitated by Dr. Stephen Carroll of the St. Luke Institute. Lunch will be served following the discussion. Please see further details in the separate article in this newsletter. (Two continuing formation hours available). [Click here to register](#).

March 14, 2026 (10:00 a.m. to Noon at the Pastoral Center): Workshops for Newly Ordained Deacons and their Wives. Designed for newly-ordained deacons (and their wives) in the ordination classes of 2021, 2023, and 2025, discussions will be held on the joys and challenges of beginning and maturing in ministry. Being held concurrently with the workshop for deacons and wives nearing/at retirement age, both groups will join for lunch following the workshop discussions. Please see further details in the separate article in this newsletter. (Two continuing formation hours available). [Click here to register.](#)

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. The workshop discussion will also include focus on deacons and wives roles in implementing the six goals for pastoral action in our Archdiocese. 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. at location TBD): 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.

Archdiocese Wedding Anniversary Mass: February 14

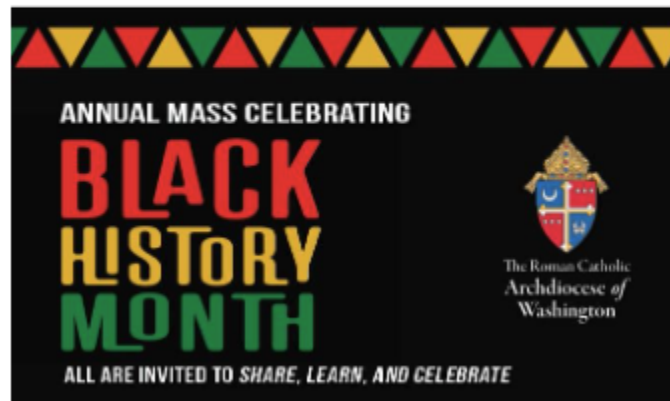


All deacons and wives are cordially invited to celebrate the Vocation of Marriage at the Archdiocese annual Wedding Anniversary Mass, on Saturday, February 14, 10:00 a.m. at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception. Deacons and their wives are witnesses to the sanctity and joy of the Sacrament of Marriage.

Please [see the flier](#) for more information and to register with your parish. Please register by February 6.

Would you like to assist as a Minister of Holy Communion at the anniversary Mass? You (and your wife) will be seated in the sanctuary. If interested in serving at the Mass, please contact Sally Daniel in the ADW Office of Family Life at daniels@adw.org or 301-853-4546.

Archdiocese Mass Celebrating Black History Month: February 21



All deacons and wives are cordially invited to participate in the *Mass Celebrating Black History Month* on Saturday, February 21, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. at Saint Joseph Catholic Church, 2020 St. Joseph's Drive, Largo, MD. Most Reverend Roy E. Campbell Jr., Auxiliary Bishop of Washington, will preside as the Principal Celebrant. Please note that deacons and wives will have ample time to travel to and attend this Mass following the Lenten Day of Reflection for Deacons and Wives on that date.

For additional information on the Mass and the *Share, Learn and Celebrate* initiative, please click [here](#) or contact Wendi Williams in the ADW Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach at williamsw@adw or 301-853-4468.

Reminder: 2025 Ongoing Formation Worksheet Due February 27



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 27, 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.

Mr. Brian Gorman, deceased, brother of Deacon James Gorman, ordination class of 2008.

Mrs. Donna Joseph, deceased, mother of Candidate Andrew Joseph.

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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