



DIRECTOR'S NOTES FOR DEACONS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

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*Advent
Edition*

BISHOP'S LETTER: CHECKING YOUR LIST TWICE WITH A SPIRITUAL LENS

Grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you this holy season of Advent. How marvelous is God to offer us His sacred comfort – the comfort we receive when we partake of the Eucharist. This sacred comfort is everlasting; for He is with us always, generation to generation for all time. I do not think it can get any better than that! Yet, I find in our encounters, that we are constantly seeking, not with a focus on God who transcends our daily living, but on other things. We have only to look at our Christmas lists to recognize that our heart may not be “rightly set.”

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The Catholic Church gives us this glorious season of Advent to prepare the way of the Lord! We are called to make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God! Isaiah the prophet tells us to shout to the world about God and, without fear, be the herald of His Good News. We are called to proclaim peace to all the people.


Pope Francis said, the greatest gift is Jesus “being in our midst, in our being in His presence and company. He walks with us. He shows us the path of love. He lifts us up when we fall, and with such tenderness. He supports us in our labors. He accompanies us in every circumstance of life.”

We look to the faith of our Blessed Mother to understand how God works through each one of us to comfort each one and to grant us His salvation. In Mary, God rejoices and is especially pleased as the angel Gabriel calls her, “blessed.” He hosts in her womb the very source of our life, Jesus, the Son of God. She lives intimately united to her Son, to show us how to straighten our crooked paths and to let everyone know of His great light by our own daily living. She challenges us to become merciful, loving people that all communities become oases and sources of charity, that everyone know of God’s indelible comfort.

Let us make haste to be ready to receive Jesus, no matter the day, time, or year. Let us empty ourselves of our old ways of thinking. We return to our focus on God and clear out the sin that clouds our vision of God. I recommend we avail ourselves to the Sacrament of Penance so that we are ready to receive God’s forgiveness to be renewed by His abiding presence within us.

Let us go back to that Christmas wish list and rethink it based upon our transfigured highway to God. Is there an action of charity listed? Is there a conversation with someone you need to forgive? Is there a time for praying with the family? Is there a desire to participate in the celebration of Mass? What might you add to keep you on God’s path?

Pope Francis exhorts us, “(T)he Word of God speaks to us of mission. Where does mission originate? The answer is simple: it originates from a call, the Lord’s call, and when He calls people, He does so with a view to sending them out. How is the one sent out meant to live? What are the reference points of Christian mission? Every Christian, and especially you and I, is called to be a bearer of this message of hope that gives serenity and joy: God’s consolation, His tenderness towards all. But if we first experience the joy of being consoled by Him, of being loved by Him, then we can bring that joy to others. This is important if our mission is to be fruitful: to feel God’s consolation and to pass it on to others!”

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John Noonan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "N".

Most Reverend John Noonan
Bishop of Orlando



VATICAN'S DOCUMENT ADDRESSING PASTORAL BLESSINGS

My Brother Priests and Deacons,

Peace be with you! Yesterday, the Prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a Declaration called Fiducia Supplicans. Due to its subject matter, the document draws a significant level of interest and attention and, at the same time, is causing some concern and questions among the faithful. The USCCB has issued an official statement which can be found [here](#).

However, to assist us in providing clarification as needed, I wish to share with you the letter written by Bishop Andrew Cozzens of Crookston and Chair of the USCCB Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis. The statement reiterates that the Church's teaching on marriage remains unchanged and articulates the distinction between liturgical blessings (which are sacramentals) and pastoral blessings "given to persons who desire God's loving grace in their lives" (Official Statement of the USCCB).

You may find the following quote from Bishop Cozzens' letter particularly helpful:

The truth is we are all sinners and all of us need God's blessing to come to repentance and conversion. Often at Holy Mass we tell people who are not able to receive Holy Communion because they are living in a situation that is objectively outside of Jesus' commandments that they should come for a blessing. This reception of the blessing expresses a humble desire to grow in conversion, to seek his help to overcome sin, to seek holiness which is the goal of every Christian life...

...And of course, as the Vatican made clear, "Any blessing will be an opportunity for a renewed proclamation of the kerygma, an invitation to draw ever closer to the love of Christ" (FS, 44). Thus, when people come to the Church seeking her blessing, let us also proclaim to them the saving love of Jesus found through repentance for all of us who are sinners.

Please know that my prayers accompany you on these final days of Advent as we prepare to celebrate the Lord's birth. I am grateful for your ministry and continued care of God's people.

Merry Christmas!

Most Reverend John Noonan
Bishop of Orlando

[Click to read statement from Bishop Andrew Cozzens](#)

Advent and Christmas Greetings

FROM THE OFFICE OF PERMANENT DEACONS

As the days get shorter and the temperatures cool, the pace of life in nature 'naturally' slows and grows quiet. It is a time for all of creation to conserve and replenish its energy for the new life of spring. The season of Advent offers us the same opportunity if we let it.

Advent is a time of preparation, but what are we preparing for? Many have already put up their Christmas lights and decorations, and most have begun to compile their Christmas shopping lists. There are parties to plan and travel arrangements to be made. Even in our parishes, the pace seems to be picking up, with Christmas concerts and added liturgical celebrations. And, of course, we face a special challenge this year as we contemplate how to handle the transition from the 4th Sunday of Advent to Christmas Eve in the space of a few short hours. But in all that busyness, where do we take the time to make way for the season to truly work upon us? Do we allow ourselves to slow down and grow quiet so that we can be watchful and alert to see how God is coming more deeply into our lives?

Despite the many demands you may feel placed upon you in this season, our prayer for you is that you may make it a priority to slow down so the seeds of the new life that God desires for you may bloom. May the light that dispels the darkness which is present in the new life of Christmas morning lift your hearts during this holy season.

Wishing you a Blessed Advent and a Holy Christmas!

-Jennifer, Joe, and Dave





REGISTER NOW! 2024 DEACON COUPLE RETREATS

Registration is open for 2024 Deacon Couple Retreats. All retreats at San Pedro Spiritual Development Center begin Friday evening and conclude midday Sunday.

CLICK TO REGISTER



JANUARY 26-28, 2024 “RECOVERING OUR DIACONAL IDENTITY AS A BELOVED CHILD OF GOD”

Registration ends January 17th, 2024.

Directed by Deacon Stephen Miletic, the Director of the institute for Diaconate Renewal at the Franciscan University at Steubenville

Are you tired, in need of refreshment, encouragement and support? This contemplative retreat will give you time to listen to God’s Word in the silence of your hearts. God’s Word deepens our bond of love with Christ the Servant. This 3-day silent retreat is designed to help us decompress, push back on the “urgent” and “necessary” duties we face. Like Jesus, leave your home, work and ministry and find solitude with the Father and tender love.

CLICK TO REGISTER



FEBRUARY 23-25, 2024 **“THE SPIRITUALITY OF GROWING OLDER GRACEFULLY”**

Directed by Mr. Greg Pierce, based on the book, *Engaging the Gifts of Growing Older*, by Frank Cunningham

This is a companion retreat to one offered to priests in the Diocese of Orlando, and ideal for both deacons and their wives as our life and ministry evolves during the stages of life.

CLICK TO REGISTER



MARCH 15-17, 2024 **“COOPERATING WITH GOD’S GRACE IN HEALING”**

Directed by Deacon Keith Stroh, former Director of the Office for the New Evangelization in the Archdiocese of Chicago

A well-known international and conference keynote speaker, he has helped tens of thousands of men and women hear the Gospel message and encounter the mercy, love, and power of Jesus Christ. Deacon Keith has extensive experience in creating and sustaining processes and programs of evangelization and formation at the group, parish and diocesan level that focus on the making, maturation, and missioning of disciples of Jesus Christ. He is the Executive Director of M3 Ministries and a long-time teacher with the Catherine of Siena Institute.

HAGA CLIC PARA
REGISTRARSE



APRIL 26-28, 2024 (SPANISH LANGUAGE)

“Todo lo que hagan, háganlo de corazón, como para el Señor y no para los hombres” (Col. 3:23).

Retreat Director Monsignor Wilfredo Peña. Nacido en Cuba y residente en Puerto Rico desde muy joven. Fue ordenado sacerdote en la Arquidiócesis de San Juan el 30 de marzo del 1974. Obtuvo su Bachillerato en Humanidades-Filosofía en la Pontificia Universidad de Ponce y un Bachillerato en Teología de la Universidad Gregoriana de Roma. Posee una Licenciatura en Derecho Canónico de la Universidad Lateranense de Roma y ostenta un Doctorado en Derecho Canónico de la Universidad de Santo Tomás de Aquino de Roma.

Fue asignado a los Estados Unidos a principios de los años ochenta. Llevó a cabo una intensa labor evangelizadora y pastoral en las Arquidiócesis de Miami, Florida y Los Ángeles, California. Fundó Cor-Jesu (Comunidad de Fe, Esperanza Caridad) junto a un grupo de laicos en Miami.

Desde el 1989, es Párroco y Pastor de la Parroquia Santa Bernardita de San Juan donde ha tenido una exitosa trayectoria desarrollando eventos pastorales y retiros. Por más de 28 años ha celebrado convivencias de renovación y evangelización para su comunidad de fe que se transmiten por internet al mundo entero. Cuenta con sobre 34 ministerios activos y se ha dedicado a cumplir con la formación cristiana de su feligresía que sobrepasa los mil creyentes.

Sacerdote soñador, emprendedor y dinámico, ha dado paso a nuevos enfoques de Evangelización de la Iglesia Católica con su lema “Abriendo Puertas para Cristo” y con ese carisma especial ha llevado el mensaje de la Buena Nueva a miles de almas a través de sus misiones en diferentes países.



DEANERY MEETING SCHEDULES

Central North: January 23, 2024, Nativity, Longwood

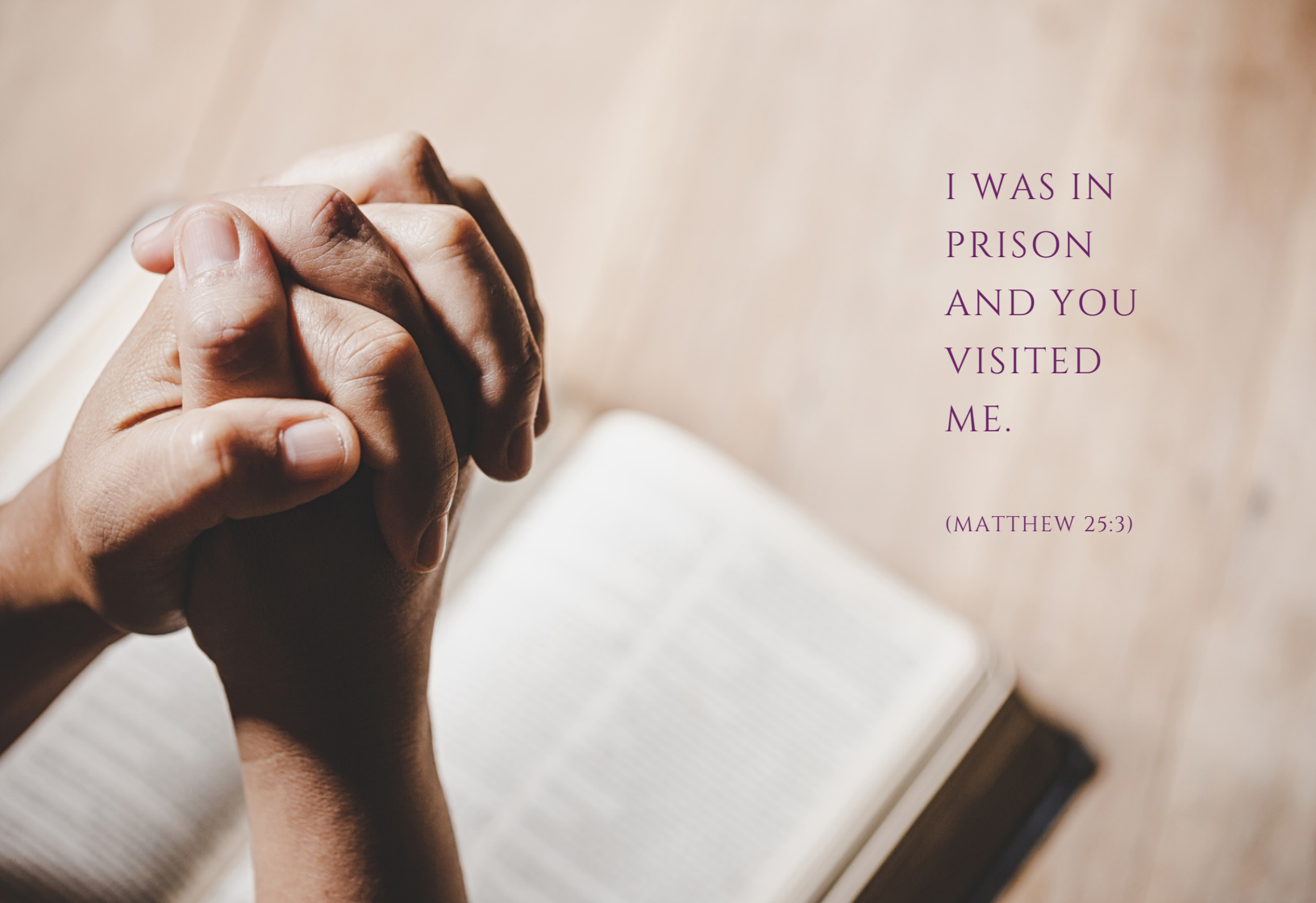
Central South: TBD

Eastern: February 17, 2023, Our Lady of Hope, Port Orange

Northern: TBD

Southern: TBD January 2024

Western: December 27, 2023, Location TBA



I WAS IN
PRISON
AND YOU
VISITED
ME.

(MATTHEW 25:3)

MINISTRIES

PRISON MINISTRY COORDINATOR

A special thanks to Deacon Jimmy Avellan for volunteering to coordinate the diocesan prison ministry. Deacon Jimmy has faithfully served in this ministry since 2000 and has a heart for serving our incarcerated brothers and sisters. His diocesan role is to connect identified needs with resources and to support existing ministries with assistance from the chancery.

LITURGICAL CORNER

The Diocese of Orlando Office of Liturgy and Music hosted a free webinar with Father Paul Turner, one of the leading authorities on liturgy in the United States. Father Turner provided an excellent expository of the three parts of the beautiful Catholic funeral liturgies. This webinar is highly recommended for all deacons and men in formation.

[CLICK TO WATCH](#)



IN REMEMBRANCE

PRAY FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIED

Please pray for the repose of the souls of Deacon Jim Brown and Deacon Rich Kaseta. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and may perpetual light shine upon them. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen.



MEMORIAL MASS SCHEDULE

Scheduled for Friday, December 29, 2023 at the Mary, Mother of God Chapel at San Pedro Spiritual Development Center

- 8:15 a.m. Liturgy of the Hours for the Dead
- 8:30 a.m. Memorial Mass for priests, deacons & laity recently buried

PRIESTS

Monsignor Vidal Arboleda
Monsignor William Mullally
Reverend Gerard Granahan
Reverend William O'Farrell
Reverend Stephen Phillips
Reverend Vincent Smith

DEACONS

Deacon James Boerstler
Deacon John Crotty
Deacon Frank Diaz
Deacon Frank Gingras
Deacon Leonard Lapointe
Deacon Chester de Marsh
Deacon Robert Pleus
Deacon James Sowinski
Deacon John Timmes

CELEBRATIONS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO OUR SENIOR DEACONS!

Deacon Byron Otradovec, 91

Deacon Charles Mallon, 86

Deacon George Mattison, 85

Deacon Mickey Vessels, 84

Deacon Esteban Cruz, 83

Deacon Esteban Ortiz, 81

Deacon Rodolfo Santos, 80

Deacon Vincent Beckles, 80

DIOCESAN CALENDAR

[Click to view the Diocesan Calendar](#)



LITURGICAL CORNER



DIOCESAN
LITURGICAL
CALENDAR



DIOCESAN
BULLETIN



CONFIRMATION
SCHEDULE



DIOCESAN
BULLETIN
ESPAÑOL



MARRIAGE
PREPARATION



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DIOCESE OF ORLANDO

