



## BISHOP'S LETTER

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### **FAITH IS NOT A 'ONE-TIME EVENT'**

Beloved Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Our cry all our days is like the apostles, as they ask Jesus to "increase our faith." We ask for God's blessings to us and moan like the Israelites to God when things don't go our way. When we pray to God to increase our faith, we are also asking God to lead us according to His will, not our own. As we live in our world, we acknowledge that our time is not God's time. We come to understand that we will endure in the face of hardships because of our faith in God. The prophet Habakkuk hears God say, "The rash one has no integrity, but the just one, because of his faith, shall live."

We have with us Jesus the Eucharist, Emmanuel, God with us. As we participate in the celebration of Mass, we receive this holy gift, Jesus the Eucharist, and we are joined with all the angels and the communion of saints to praise God with thanksgiving, for God does not leave us to increase our faith on our own. United with the heavenly liturgy, we anticipate eternal life, where God will be all in all.

**[READ MORE](#)**

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## DIACONATE CONVOCAATION

It was wonderful to see all who attended our Diaconate Convocation on October 4, 2025. The Friday evening social was an excellent opportunity for those attending to reconnect in a relaxed setting. A special thank you to the Very Reverend Miguel González for his amazing talk on Hope. Please pray for our nine men who were instituted as acolytes as they move closer to possible ordination next June.

**Save the Date for next year's convocation: October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026.**

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## FORMATION DISCERNMENT NIGHTS

*We are truly inspired by the turnout for our six discernment nights. It was a privilege to connect with 86 men and their wives who are discerning a possible call to the diaconate. Please pray for these men as they embark on this important journey.*



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

## ANNUAL DEACON COUPLE RETREATS FOR 2026 WILL BE:

### January 23-25, 2026: Developing the Interior Life

*Led by Deacon Matthew Newsome*

Deacon Matthew Newsome serves in campus ministry and the office of catechetical formation in the Diocese of Charlotte. He is the author of **The Devout Life: A Modern Guide to Practical Holiness with St. Francis de Sales** (Sophia Institute Press, 2023), and writes a monthly column for the **Catholic News Herald**. His writings have also appeared in The Deacon, Envoy, This Rock (now Catholic Answers Magazine), and online at Homiletic and Pastoral Review, Dappled Things and Catholic Exchange. He holds a master's degree in Theology from Holy Apostles College & Seminary. His homilies, reflections, and musings on ministry can be found at [teachingandpreaching.substack.com](https://teachingandpreaching.substack.com).

He and his wife Joannie have seven children and live on a little plot of land in the mountains of North Carolina that they share with a small flock of sheep, a smattering of chickens, and an ornery old donkey.

### February 20-22, 2026: TBD

### March 20-22, 2026: God Needs Storytellers!

*Led by Deacon Rick Wagner*

God is constantly tapping us on the shoulder, letting us know He is actively engaged in our lives. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, many people do not recognize God's presence.

That is where we come in – God needs storytellers! By virtue of our baptism, we - all Christians – have an obligation to proclaim the gospel. “Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature.” (Mark 16:15)

This retreat experience will explore our role as storytellers, answering questions such as:

- What do we mean by storytelling?
- Why is it important – especially now?
- What types of stories should we be telling?
- We must walk the walk and talk the talk.

Retreat includes presentations, small group discussion, and some large group sharing.

### April 17-19, 2026: Spanish Language Retreat TBD





## PARISHES STILL IN NEED OF DEACONS

Several pastors have requested additional deacons be assigned to their parishes. If you feel God may be calling you to one of these parishes, or that God may be letting you know it is time to change parishes, please contact **Deacon Dave** to discuss one or more of these opportunities:

### ST. ANDREW PARISH

801 N. Hastings St., Orlando | Needs a bilingual English/Spanish deacon.

**Pastor:** Father Leo Hodges

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### ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH (WINTER HAVEN)

532 Ave. M, NW, Winter Haven | Needs a bilingual English/Spanish deacon.

**Parochial Administrator:** Father Glenn Lopez

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### BLESSED TRINITY PARISH

4545 Anderson Rd., Orlando | Needs a bilingual English/Spanish deacon.

**Pastor:** Father Phil 'Skip' Negley

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### ST. PAUL PARISH AND SCHOOL

1330 Sunshine Ave., Leesburg | Needs a deacon (bilingual Spanish/English preferred).

**Parochial Administrator:** Father Stephen Ogonwa



# THE SIMPLE PROCESS TO RECEIVE A NEEDED LETTER OF GOOD STANDING

A common request we receive is from deacons who wish a Letter of Good Standing when they wish to serve outside the Diocese of Orlando. They may have been asked to preside at a wedding, baptism or funeral of a family member or friend, be attending a conference or a pilgrimage, or simply be traveling and wish to have faculties. The process for receiving this letter consists of two simple steps:

## 1. Be in Good Standing

To be in Good Standing in the Diocese of Orlando you must be current on your background check and Safe Environment training (renewed every 5 years) and have turned in your Annual Forms for the current year. Completing your Annual Forms is not difficult. Each year you are reminded, starting in January, to complete the forms no later than June 1st. The first of two forms is your Self-Evaluation Form which includes your Continuing Formation activities. This form takes less than an hour to complete. Immediately send in a copy of this form, while you request the Pastor Evaluation Form from your pastor. We give you credit for being in Good Standing even while we await this second form to be turned in. The forms are available and should be downloaded from [our link](#).

**IMPORTANT: Letters requested for deacons not in Good Standing per the above will not be granted.**

## 2. Request Your Letter of Good Standing a Minimum of 3 Weeks in Advance

To ensure we have all the necessary information, Letters of Good Standing must be requested by submitting the following [online form](#).

*Do not simply email or make a phone call to the office, as you may not send all the required information, which will delay processing.*

While last-minute requests for funerals may be processed through an emergency procedure as they cannot be predicted, the Vicar General must authorize all such requests, and it is neither reasonable nor courteous to make a last-minute request for an anticipated need and expect it to be done.

Thank you for following these two simple steps to ensure you receive your required Letter of Good Standing.





## THE QUESTION OF STIPENDS FOR PERFORMING SACRAMENTAL SERVICES

Every few years it is good to review the standards set by our diocese regarding the issue of stipends or honorariums for deacons performing our ministerial duties. The policy for our diocese is based on the premise that the faithful should never be 'charged' for sacramental services. Starting from that understanding, deacons are never to seek stipends or honorariums for performing our ministry and should discourage the payment of such stipends when these services are performed for our own parish. These services should be freely given parts of our ministry to the parish at which we have been assigned. In cases where the deacon is requested to perform such services unrelated to his parish (e.g. speaker at a conference, serving as retreat director, or performing a gravesite service at a cemetery for other than a parish member), the deacon may accept a gift or honorarium. In all cases, it is recommended that any monies received be either donated to charity or used to offset legitimate expenses in support of your ministry. Note that any funds received must be reported as income on your taxes.





## CHAPLAIN

# CATHOLIC SPIRITUAL CARE MINISTERS NEEDED AT ORLANDO HEALTH – ORMC

There is an urgent need for Catholic Spiritual Care Ministers at Orlando Regional Medical Center in downtown Orlando. While our parishes remain the spiritual home for many, the hospital becomes a temporary “church” for thousands each year. Hospital rooms are often the margins of parish life and places where the Church is most needed. Each hospital visit becomes a small liturgy of love, a sacred encounter between Christ, His Church, and those who suffer.

Deacons are uniquely positioned to bring the light of Christ into these vulnerable spaces. In times of medical uncertainty, a deacon’s presence offers calm, reassurance, and hope. Hospital ministry provides a grace-filled opportunity to encounter Christ in the sick through compassionate listening, prayer, and words of hope. The deacon also stands as a witness to resurrection faith which offers the peace of Christ to those facing fear, grief, or death. Volunteers will also help coordinate sacramental needs such as Anointing of the Sick and Reconciliation in partnership with priests serving at ORMC.

Currently, only four Catholic volunteers serve weekly in this 1,700-bed hospital alongside our chaplains. We are seeking deacons and men in formation to join this important work. The ministry is also open to deacon wives and wives of men in formation who feel called to this ministry and are trained as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

We invite you to prayerfully consider this vital ministry. The hospital is a sacred place where the wounded Body of Christ is present, where souls long for comfort, and where the Gospel is proclaimed not only in words but through a ministry of presence.

If you feel called to serve, please contact **Deacon Bryan Zornik** for more information.

**There are also requests for part-time chaplains at Advent Health Hospitals, as well! Contact **Deacon Dave** if you’re interested.**





## MINISTRIES

### CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF CENTRAL FLORIDA, PATHWAYS TO CARE

Learn how to volunteer.

### TOURISM

Contact **Deacon Joe Gassman** to learn what is needed to serve at the Basilica of the Natural Shrine of Mary Queen of the Universe.

### MINISTRY TO THE INCARCERATED

If you want to learn more about this ministry, reach out to **Deacon Jimmy Avellan**.  
If you know of prisons or jails that are underserved, please let us know.



# *Happy Birthday*

## — TO OUR SENIOR DEACONS! —

DEACON JACINTO ORTIZ	89
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DEACON PETER DIGIUSEPPE	85
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DEACON RAFAEL GONZALEZ	83
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DEACON CARL ORBON	83
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DEACON JOSÉ SERRANO	82
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DEACON WALTER PRICE	82
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DEACON DANA MCCARTHY	81
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# IN REMEMBRANCE

## **PRAY FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIED**

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*

**ENGLISH - FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31, 8:30 A.M.**

Mary, Mother of God Chapel  
San Pedro Spiritual Development Center



# DIOCESAN CALENDAR

Click to view  
Diocesan Calendar



## LITURGICAL CORNER



**DIOCESAN  
LITURGICAL  
CALENDAR**



**DIOCESAN  
BULLETIN  
ANNOUNCEMENTS**



**CONFIRMATION  
SCHEDULE**



**ANUNCIO DEL  
BOLETÍN  
DIOCESANO**



**MARRIAGE  
PREPARATION**





*Charles*