



BISHOP'S LETTER

DURING LENTEN PILGRIMAGE CARRY CROSS WITH JESUS

Beloved Children of God:

From the Scripture of the fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Feb. 8, the prophet Isaiah speaks to us as Jesus also speaks to us, “your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father” (Mt 5:16). In due time, on Wednesday, Feb. 18, we will begin the season of Lent and these words from Isaiah and Jesus are heralds for each one of us as heart, spirit and strength to carry the Cross with Jesus. They are the enlightened wisdom for which St. Paul expresses as he tells the Corinthians that he had no words of wisdom except that he is inspired by the breath of the Holy Spirit.

[READ MORE](#)

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ANNUAL FORM

Now is the time to begin scheduling those meetings with your Pastors. The due date for annual forms is **June 1, 2026**.

CHRISM MASS

Chrism Mass will be on March 30, 2026, beginning at 11:00 a.m. at Holy Family Catholic Church. If you plan to attend and vest, please click the link below to register for the Chrism Mass. This registration link will remain active until March 23, 2026.

[Register for Chrism Mass](#)

LETTER OF GOOD STANDING

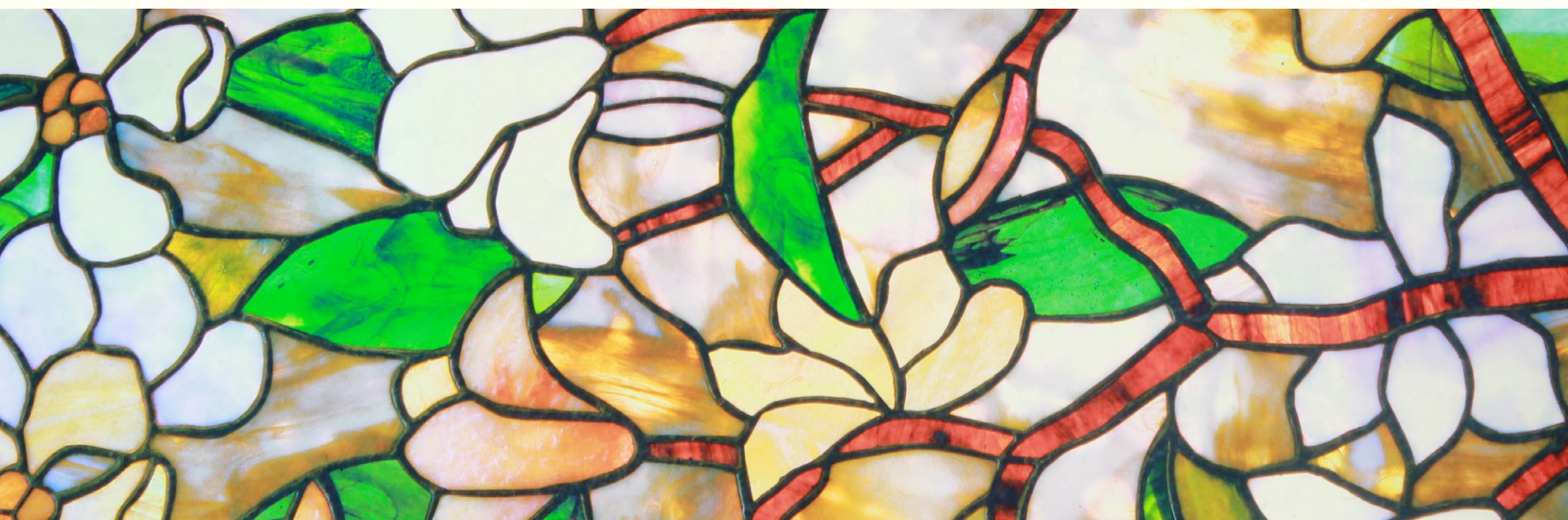
Do you remember what is needed to be in “Good Standing”? Submit your annual forms, take/participate in an overnight retreat, and keep your Safe Environment Training and fingerprint clearance up to date.

TOURISM MINISTRY

Serving at the Basilica of the National Shrine of Mary, Queen of the Universe has been such a rewarding experience. The liturgy is beautiful, the partnership with the diaconate formation program and especially the engagement with the pilgrims after Mass has moved my heart as I pray, bless, laugh, and cry with the pilgrims inspired by the beauty of the liturgy and campus.

Due to a number of circumstances, we’ve been struggling to cover all the Mass times. We would like to encourage deacons to volunteer to serve, even if it is once a quarter, to support this growing ministry to serve the thousands of pilgrims visiting the Mary Queen of the Universe.

If you would like to be included in the rotation contact **Deacon Joe Gassman**.



DEANERIES

The **Central Deanery** is now comprised of three sections: Central North, Central, and Central South.

Diocese of Orlando Map of Churches, Missions, Schools, and Entities

Northern Deanery

1. St. Theresa, Belleview
2. Immaculate Heart of Mary, Candler
3. St. John the Baptist, Dunnellon
4. Queen of Peace, Ocala
5. St. Jude, Ocala
6. Blessed Trinity, Ocala
7. Christ the King Mission, Ocala
8. Our Lady of the Springs, Ocala
9. St. Joseph of the Forest Mission, Ocala
10. Trinity Catholic High School, Ocala
11. Misión Católica La Guadalupeana, Ocala
12. St. Mark the Evangelist, Summerfield
14. St. Mary of the Lakes and CCCF St. Luke Free Medical and Dental Clinic, Eustis
15. St. Paul and CCCF Service Center, Leesburg
16. St. Timothy, Lady Lake
17. St. Lawrence, Bushnell
18. St. Vincent de Paul, Wildwood
19. San Pedro de Jesus Maldonado Mission and CCCF Lazarus Free Medical Clinic, Leesburg

Central Deanery North

20. St. Patrick, Mount Dora
21. Annunciation, Altamonte Springs
22. St. Mary Magdalen, Altamonte Springs
23. St. Augustine, Casselberry
24. CCCF Pathways to Care/Step 2, Casselberry
25. Nativity, Longwood
26. Most Precious Blood, Oviedo
27. All Souls, Sanford
28. Sts. Peter and Paul, Winter Park
29. San Pedro Center, Winter Park
30. St. Stephen, Winter Springs
31. St. Francis of Assisi, Apopka
33. St. Margaret Mary, Winter Park
34. Rollins College Campus Ministry, Winter Park
35. University of Central Florida Campus Ministry, Oviedo

Central Deanery

36. Blessed Sacrament, Clermont
37. Santo Toribio Romo Mission, Mascotte
38. St. Andrew and CCCF Family Stability Program, Orlando
39. St. Charles Borromeo, Orlando
40. St. Philip Phan Van Minh, Orlando
41. St. James Cathedral, Orlando
42. St. Joseph and St. Maximilian Kolbe, Orlando
43. CCCF St. Joseph Garden Courts, Orlando

Central Deanery (continued)

44. Catholic Charities of Central Florida Headquarters (CCCF), Orlando
45. Good Shepherd, Orlando
46. St. Ignatius Kim Korean Mission, Orlando
47. Blessed Trinity, Orlando
48. St. Isaac Jogues, Orlando
49. Holy Family, Orlando
50. St. John Vianney, Orlando
51. Basilica of the National Shrine of Mary, Queen of the Universe, Orlando
52. Morning Star Catholic School, Orlando
53. Bishop Moore Catholic High School, Orlando
54. Resurrection, Winter Garden

Central Deanery South

55. St. Faustina, Clermont
56. Holy Cross, Orlando
57. St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, Orlando
58. Corpus Christi, Celebration
59. Holy Redeemer, Kissimmee
60. St. Catherine of Siena, Kissimmee
61. St. Rose of Lima, Kissimmee
62. St. Thomas Aquinas and CCCF St. Thomas Aquinas Medical Clinic, St. Cloud
63. Bishop Grady Villas, St. Cloud
64. CCCF St. Anthony Garden Courts, St. Cloud

Eastern Deanery

65. Basilica of St. Paul, Daytona Beach
66. Bethune Cookman University Campus Ministry, Daytona Beach
67. Embry Riddle Aeronautical University Campus Ministry, Daytona Beach
68. Father Lopez Catholic High School, Daytona Beach
69. Our Lady of Lourdes, Daytona Beach
70. St. Ann, DeBary
71. St. Peter, Deland
72. Stetson University Campus Ministry, Deland
73. Our Lady of the Lakes, Deltona
74. St. Clare, Deltona
75. St. Gerard Mission, Edgewater
76. Our Lady Star of the Sea, New Smyrna Beach
77. Sacred Heart, New Smyrna Beach
78. CCCF Family Stability Program at Hand Me Up Thrift Store, Ormond Beach
79. Prince of Peace and CCCF Family Stability Program, Ormond Beach

Southern Deanery

84. St. Luke, Barefoot Bay
85. Blessed Sacrament and CCCF Food Pantry and Family Stability Program, Cocoa
86. Our Saviour, Cocoa Beach
87. Holy Name of Jesus, Indialantic
88. Holy Spirit, Mims
89. Divine Mercy, Merritt Island
90. Ascension, Melbourne
91. Florida Institute of Technology Campus Ministry, Melbourne
92. Our Lady of Lourdes, Melbourne
93. Melbourne Central Catholic High School, Melbourne
94. Immaculate Conception, Melbourne Beach
95. St. Joseph, Palm Bay
96. Our Lady of Grace, Palm Bay
97. St. Mary, Rockledge
98. St. Teresa, Titusville
99. St. John the Evangelist, Viera

Western Deanery

100. St. Thomas Aquinas, Bartow
101. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Mission, Fort Meade
102. St. Ann, Haines City
103. Florida Southern College Campus Ministry, Lakeland
104. Resurrection, Lakeland
105. Santa Fe Catholic High School, Lakeland
106. St. Anthony, Lakeland
107. St. Joseph, Lakeland
108. St. John Neumann, Lakeland
109. CCCF Family Stability Program; CCCF Agape Food Bank; and CCCF The Lakeland Activity Center for Seniors, Lakeland
110. Holy Spirit, Lake Wales
111. Centro Guadalupeño Mission, Wahneta
112. St. Joseph, CCCF Food Pantry and Family Stability Program, Winter Haven
113. St. Matthew, Winter Haven

MAP LEGEND

- PARISH
 - PARISH AND SCHOOL
 - HIGH SCHOOL
 - CAMPUS MINISTRY
 - SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOL
 - MISSION
 - ENTITY
 - CCCF (circle or black outline) Catholic Charities of Central Florida
- ORANGE AND SEMINOLE COUNTIES ARE NOT TO SCALE



UPDATED: December 2025



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

ANNUAL DEACON COUPLE RETREATS

Registration for the Annual Deacon Couple Retreats for 2026 is in full swing.
[Click Here to Register.](#)

February 20-22, 2026: Draw Near to God and He Will Draw Near to You

Led by the religious sisters of the Missionaries of the Holy Family

This retreat will lead deacons and their wives to deepen their personal and spousal prayer life. Topics will include Encountering the God Who Loves First, The Deacon and His Wife: Praying as One, and Interceding for the People of God. **The Missionary Sisters of the Holy Family** are a religious congregation rooted in the communion of the Holy Trinity and modeled on the unity of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Three congregation members will lead the talks.

This registration will close by February 12, 2026.



CONTINUED

ANNUAL DEACON COUPLE RETREATS

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

Led by Father Carlos Agudelo

Reverend Carlos A. Agudelo is the Pastor of St. Leon Church in Corona, New York, where he also serves as Area Dean and a member of the Presbyteral Council for Pastoral Practice Affairs. Ordained a priest in 1998 in Medellín, Colombia, he has served in the Diocese of Brooklyn since 2010 and was incardinated in 2016. With 27 years of priestly ministry, he exercises comprehensive pastoral and faith leadership for his parish community. Additionally, he has taught for several years in the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program and for one year at the Josephinum Institute.



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

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH (WINTER HAVEN)

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

Parochial Administrator: Father Glenn Lopez

BLESSED TRINITY PARISH

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

Pastor: Father Phil 'Skip' Negley

ST. PAUL PARISH AND SCHOOL

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

Parochial Administrator: Father Stephen Ogonwa

ST. MARY CATHOLIC CHURCH

1136 Seminole Drive, Rockledge | Needs a bilingual English/Spanish deacon.

Pastor: Father Joseph Shaute

As we approach our next Diaconate Ordination, we will begin to review parishes with an abundant number of deacons and thus reassignments will be made. As you can see, several parishes need help. We are ordained to serve the needs of the people of the entire diocese.

CARING FOR A DEACON AND HIS FAMILY AT THE TIME OF HIS DEATH

"I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith. From now on the crown of righteousness awaits me, which the Lord, the just judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but to all who have longed for his appearance" – 2 Timothy 4:7-8.

While we live our diaconal service faithfully here on earth, we know our eternal home is union with our Loving God in heaven. The Church in her love for her clergy has specific rites regarding the preparation for and funeral rites of deacons. The first step when a permanent deacon dies is to notify the Office of Permanent Deacons so we can support the parish and family in the necessary preparation of the rites. Our office will coordinate with the Bishop's Office and the Office of Worship to ensure all necessary support is provided to the parish and family. Some key considerations are listed below:

- **Deacon's Funeral Plan on File with the Diaconate Office:** All deacons are asked to have a funeral plan expressing their liturgical and other preferences on file with the Office of Permanent Deacons, as well as a copy with their parish and family. This helps the family and parish in making decisions consistent with the deacon's desires.
- **The Vesting of a Deacon:** A deacon should be vested prior to public viewing and the funeral rites. The Church provides a prayer ritual to be conducted as the deacon is vested at the funeral home. The vesting should be done by fellow clergy (deacons and/or priests). The rite may be found on [our diocesan website](#).
- **The bishop (if available) traditionally presides at the funeral Mass of the deacon.** If he is not available, then he may designate it to the pastor of the deacon's parish or another priest, if desired by the family. It is expected that a cleric (priest or deacon) will give the homily. Care should be taken that the homily focuses on the promise of the Resurrection and not be a simple eulogy of the deceased deacon.
- **Deacons from throughout the diocese are invited to attend the funeral of their deceased brother.** The Office of Permanent Deacons will assist in the coordination of the funeral notice and will work with the parish to assure proper reserved seating for the vested deacons to sit as a college of deacons.

Together we give thanks to God for all our deacons who have faithfully served the People of God with the fullness of their lives.



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 National Shrine of Mary, Queen of the Universe.

DIVINE MERCY/FIRST FRIDAYS

Looking for deacon couples to lead the Divine Mercy Chaplet on First Fridays at the Basilica. For more information, contact **Deacon Joe Gassman**.

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.

DIACONATE CONVOCATION

Please mark your calendars now for our annual Diaconate Convocation on Saturday, October 3, 2026, at Holy Family Catholic Church. We are excited to announce that our convocation keynote speaker will be Sister Helen Prejean. Sister Helen Prejean is known around the world for her tireless work against the death penalty. She has been instrumental in sparking national dialogue on capital punishment and in shaping the Catholic Church's vigorous opposition to all executions.

Born on April 21, 1939, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, she joined the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1957. In 1982, Sister Prejean began corresponding with Patrick Sonnier, who had been sentenced to death for the murder of two teenagers. Two years later, when Patrick Sonnier was put to death in the electric chair, Sister Prejean was there to witness his execution. In the following months, she became spiritual advisor to another death row inmate, Robert Lee Willie, who was to meet the same fate as Sonnier.

After witnessing these executions, Sister Prejean realized that this lethal ritual would remain unchallenged unless its secrecy was stripped away, and so she sat down and wrote a book, *Dead Man Walking: An Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty in the United States*. *Dead Man Walking* hit the shelves when national support for the death penalty was over 80% and, in Sister Prejean's native Louisiana, closer to 90%. The book ignited a national debate on capital punishment, and inspired an Academy Award winning movie, a play and an opera. Sister Prejean also embarked on a speaking tour that continues to this day. Over the decades, Sister Prejean has made personal approaches to two popes, Pope John Paul II and Pope Francis, urging them to establish the Catholic Church's position as unequivocally opposed to capital punishment under any circumstances. After Sister Prejean's urging, under Pope John Paul II the catechism was revised to strengthen the church's opposition to executions, although it allowed for a very few exceptions. Not long after meeting with Sister Prejean in August of 2018, Pope Francis announced new language of the Catholic Catechism which declares that the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person, with no exceptions.

Although Sr. Prejean rarely addresses conferences in person, she has accepted our invitation to speak at our convocation, recognizing that Florida is 'ground zero' for the death penalty debate and knows the influence that the diaconate community (deacons and wives) can bring to this important issue. Don't miss this unique opportunity!

Happy Birthday

DEACON RAFAEL HERNANDEZ	93
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DEACON RICHARD STEVENS	84
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DEACON TOM STAUFFACHER	82
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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, FEBRUARY 27, 2026

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**



DIRECTOR'S NOTES FOR DEACONS
FEBRUARY 2026 | VOL 43