



BISHOP'S LETTER

DON'T BE GATEKEEPERS, SHARE GOD'S 'MATCHLESS LOVE'

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

How marvelous is the love of the Good Shepherd, our resurrected God who cares for all the people. As we journey with the first Christians, we hear story after story proclaimed about the growing Church in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean and the fervent faith of the people as they listen to and accept the Word of God.

[READ MORE](#)

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ANNUAL FORM

DUE June 1, 2026 - Start to schedule those meetings with your Pastors.

ORDINATIONS-MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Priest Ordination: May 23, 2026, Deacon Dan Bassile and Deacon Sinclair Cushmore will be ordained into the Priesthood. This Ordination Mass will take place at St. James Cathedral at 10:00 A.M.

To register, please click [this link](#).

Diaconate Ordination: Eight men will be ordained at the Basilica of the National Shrine of Mary, Queen of the Universe at 10:00 A.M. on June 6, 2026. Remember your wives are welcome. There should be plenty of seating.

To register, please click [this link](#).

ANNUAL DIACONATE CONVOCATION: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2026

We are excited to announce that our Keynote Speaker for our annual convocation will be **Sr. Helen Prejean, CSJ**, who is a leading advocate for the abolition of the death penalty. She is known for her best-selling book, *Dead Man Walking* (1993) based on her experiences with two convicts on death row whom she served as their spiritual adviser before their executions. In her book, she explored the effects of the death penalty on everyone involved. In 2019 she wrote a memoir titled *River of Fire: My Spiritual Journey*. In it she talks about her spiritual journey leading her to engage in social justice work. Don't miss this opportunity to hear this wise and powerful speaker and to spend time reconnecting with our diocesan diaconal community.

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.



MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF CENTRAL FLORIDA, PATHWAYS TO CARE

Learn how to volunteer.

TOURISM

Serving at the [Basilica of the National Shrine of Mary, Queen of the Universe](#) continues to be a deeply rewarding ministry. The beauty of the liturgy, our collaboration with the Diaconate Formation Program, and the opportunity to accompany pilgrims in prayer and conversation make this service especially meaningful.

As visitation grows, we are having trouble covering all scheduled Mass times. We invite deacons to consider [volunteering](#)—even once per quarter—to support this important ministry to the thousands who visit the Basilica.

If you would like to be included in the rotation, please contact [Deacon Joe Gassman](#).

DIVINE MERCY/FIRST FRIDAYS

Looking for deacon couples to lead the Divine Mercy Chaplet on First Fridays at the Basilica of the National Shrine of Mary, Queen of the Universe. 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.

USCCB SAINT FRANCIS: VISIONARY OF LIFE

Hold fast to the memory of our father and brother, Francis, for the praise and glory of Him who made him great among us and glorified him in the sight of the angels.¹

Saint Francis, the poor man of Assisi, is a powerful model for us in building a world and culture that is authentically pro-life. This 13th century saint was a visionary of the radiant goodness of human life.

Early in Saint Francis' conversion, he was riding through the countryside and came across a person suffering from leprosy. Despite being repelled by the appearance and smell, he came down from his horse and kissed the hand of the leper, who returned his kiss of peace, filling Francis with joy. He could see the invaluable dignity of every person, even amidst utter poverty, the disfigurement of disease, and the stain of sin.

Saint Francis is well-known for his radical imitation of Christ and his love for all creation. This is evident in his prayer, "The Canticle of the Creatures," which praises God for all He has created: the sun, moon, and stars; wind,



water, and fire. Francis proclaims that the created world reveals the glory of God himself. This is particularly true for the human person, created in the image of God, whose life from conception to natural death is to be honored and protected. Among all creation, the human person has the unique capacity to praise God, highlighting the distinctive dignity of human life.

1 Angelo Cardinal De Donatis, "Decree of the Apostolic Penitentiary on the occasion of the Eighth Centenary of the death of Saint Francis of Assisi, by which a special Jubilee Year is proclaimed, with associated Plenary Indulgences, 16.01.2026," (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2026).

CONTINUED SAINT FRANCIS: VISIONARY OF LIFE

Strikingly, Francis uttered his “Canticle” while lying half-blind on his deathbed. In welcoming “Sister Death,” Francis could no longer physically see the beauty of creation, yet still he praised God for the created world around him.

Oftentimes we, too, are blinded to the goodness of life. Our vision may be blurred by hardships such as poverty, fragility, or suffering, all of which Saint Francis experienced in his earthly life. In the face of such challenges, Saint Francis is a powerful intercessor, opening our heart and eyes to the gift of life even in the most trying circumstances. Francis had a particular devotion to the Lord’s own vulnerability—in the manger, in the Eucharist, and on the Cross—highlighting God’s presence in the most defenseless among us.

Pope Leo XIV has decreed that for 2026 “a special Year of Saint Francis shall be proclaimed, in which every faithful Christian, following the example of the Saint of Assisi, shall become a model of holiness of life and a constant witness of peace.”² The taking of innocent human life through abortion, assisted suicide, and other acts of violence destroys peace in our world.³ We are called to be witnesses of peace by boldly proclaiming the dignity of the human person and working for the protection of all human life.

Most High, glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart and give me true faith, certain hope, and perfect charity, sense and knowledge, Lord, that I may carry out Your holy and true command.⁴

Saint Francis’ “Prayer before the Crucifix”

² *Ibid.*

³ Pope Leo XIV, “Address to Participants in the ‘One Humanity, One Planet’ Conference,” January 31, 2026 (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2026).

⁴ Armstrong, Regis J., O.F.M. Cap., J. A. Wayne Hellmann, O.F.M. Conv., and William J. Short, O.F.M., eds., *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents – The Saint* (New York, NY: New City Press, 2001), 40.

SAN PEDRO SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

MAY CALENDAR

Mother's Day Brunch

Sunday, May 10, 2026 | 11:30 A.M. - 1:30 P.M.

Join us for our annual Mother's Day Brunch!

[View Event](#)

San Damiano- The Mother of the Word: How Mary Translates the Gospel to the World

Thursday, May 14, 2026 | 9:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.

Join Father Peter Latouf to explore how the Blessed Mother is lovingly portrayed around the world.

[View Event](#)

VIVET- Youth and Young Adult Formation & Adoration

Wednesday, May 20, 2026 | 7:30 P.M. - 8:30 P.M.

All youth and young adults are invited to join the Servants of the Pierced Heart of Jesus and Mary for Adoration, Praise, Worship and Prayer!

[View Event](#)

Fill Your Cup: The Sacred Heart of Jesus

Thursday, May 28, 2026 | 7:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.

As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops prepares to consecrate the United States to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, on June 11, this program offers a timely opportunity to prepare our own hearts for this moment of grace.

[View Event](#)

San Damiano Senior Day- Holy Scripture: The WORD Made Flesh

Thursday, June 11, 2026 | 9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.

How was the Bible formed, and how can it shape your life today? Come discover, reflect, and pray with Scripture.

[View Event](#)

LITURGY UPDATES & SEASONAL RESOURCES

Click here to access your copy of the *Liturgical Preparation Aid for the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ*. This booklet is one of several resources and formation opportunities which the Federation is providing during the **Eucharistic Revival**.

JUNE 11TH, 2026: CONSECRATION OF THE COUNTRY TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

At the November 2025 Plenary Assembly, the Bishops of the United States voted to consecrate the USA to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in recognition of the nation's 250th birthday. Details of the celebration were assigned to the Bishops' Committee for Religious Liberty.

*That Committee has developed a webpage **We Hold These Truths | USCCB***

- The consecration is scheduled for Thursday, June 11, 2026. (The solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is Friday, June 12, this year.)
- The text for local celebrations is scheduled to be posted this week.
- Other resources are already posted, including a novena, prayers, and a litany.
- The webpage also encourages parishes and individuals to participate in 250 hours of adoration and 250 works of mercy.
- Various articles on religious liberty and patriotism also appear.

Please continue to check back to that webpage for more information

2025-2026 DIOCESAN CHOIR

The diocesan choir will be reconvening for both the Diaconate and Priesthood Ordinations this Spring. Please see the schedule below:

Sat 5/23 10:00 A.M. (8:45 A.M. call) Priest Ordination (*Cathedral*)

Mon 6/1 7:00-8:30 P.M. Rehearsal - in preparation for Diaconate Ordination (*Cathedral*)

Sat 6/6 10:00 A.M. (8:45 A.M. call) Diaconate Ordination (*Shrine*)

*If you would like more information about joining the Diocesan Choir for future liturgies, please email **David McIntyre**.*

2026 EMHC WORKSHOPS

EMHC Coordinators or Liturgy Directors ONLY:

Please fill out our EMHC Formation Workshop Host Application to schedule a workshop for the Spring 2026 season. *Please note these workshops are for new EMHCs and are open to the whole deanery.*

Those looking to become an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion can apply this Fall. EMHC Candidates must register for a workshop online via Eventbrite. A completed Petition for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion with the pastor's signature must be sent to the Office of Liturgy. [Click here to visit EMHC webpage and register.](#)

St. Clare, Deltona (E)

May 16th, 2026

English & Spanish

St. Timothy, Lady Lake (N)

July 11th, 2026

Immaculate Heart of Mary, Candler (N)

May 23rd, 2026

Epiphany, Port Orange (E)

August 29th, 2026

Blessed Trinity, Ocala (N)

June 27th, 2026

OPPORTUNITIES FROM NPM FROM OUTSIDE TO INSIDE: TRANSITIONING TO PRAYING

Presenter: Ron O'Connor, SJ

May 18, 2026 | 8:00-9:30 P.M.

Included in NPM membership; \$20 for non-members

Introductory Rites can assist the faithful to transition from outside to inside, from distraction to presence. It has to do with how to become present and what to remember during the Rites. Presence involves becoming grounded in the body (both our individual bodies and in the Body of Christ) as well as attention to 'where and how I am located' with Christ.

Since the Introductory Rites are made up of several parts, it helps to learn and remember the purpose of each part. We will discover and practice the rites together. [Click here to register.](#)

OPPORTUNITIES FROM NPM

JUST ANNOUNCED: CHOIR REHEARSAL WEBINAR

Presenter: Luke Rosen

June 8, 2026 | 8:00-9:30 P.M.

While we as directors are on a carefully timed rehearsal schedule, our choir members are coming to our rehearsals searching for something fun, uplifting, and rewarding. Choir rehearsals can be musically purposeful AND all these other things at the same time. Join us for some tips and tricks to bring life to rehearsals. [Click here to register.](#)

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PASTORAL MUSICIANS

Join us for the 50th anniversary of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians in 2026! This year's theme, "Forever We Will Sing," takes its inspiration from Psalm 89. NPM's work to foster the art of musical liturgy has shaped Catholic worship since the Second Vatican Council – and our work is not done yet. [Click here to register.](#)

Join us on July 19th-24th at Catholic University of America for 4 days of:

- Plenum Addresses – Breakouts
- Networking Opportunities – Community
- Special Events – National Awards – Exhibits

PARISH GRANTS PROGRAM FROM OREGON CATHOLIC PRESS

The Parish Grants Program is open to all Roman Catholic parishes and campus ministries in the United States and U.S. territories. Awarded grants must be used for liturgical and/or musical purposes that strengthen parish worship. Typical uses include purchasing new music and worship resources; repairing or replacing musical instruments; supporting the formation of musicians and liturgical ministers; enhancing multicultural ministries through training and the purchases of bilingual or multilingual resources. Funds may also be applied to other music-related needs that directly support the liturgy.

For more information and to apply [click here.](#)

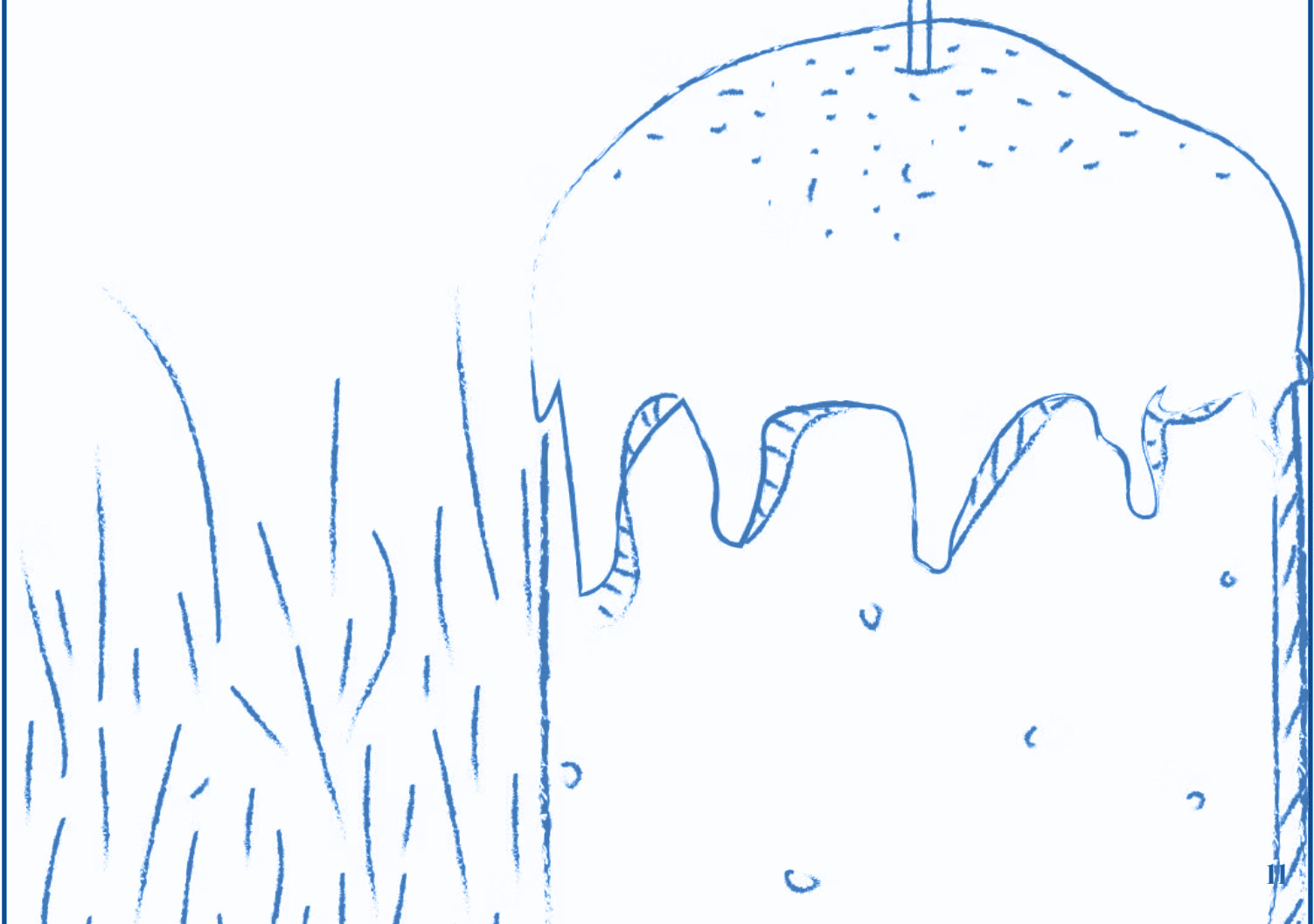
Happy Birthday

DEACON ANDY MURELLO 93

DEACON FRANK FALOTICO 90

DEACON ANTONIO MARTINEZ 90

DEACON DAVE WENDEL 84



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

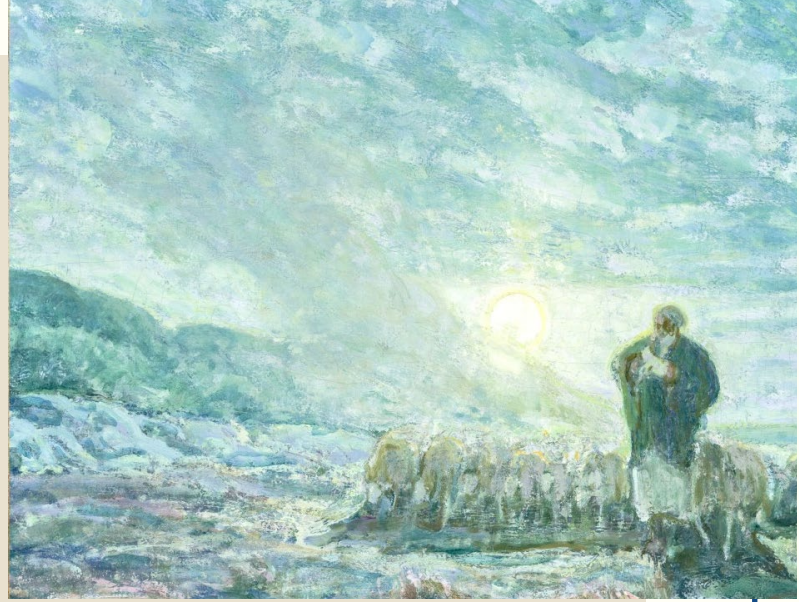
SPANISH - FRIDAY, MAY 15, 8:15 A.M.

ENGLISH - FRIDAY, MAY 29, 8:15 A.M.

MARY, MOTHER OF GOD CHAPEL
SAN PEDRO SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

DIOCESAN CALENDAR

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DIOCESAN CALENDAR](#)



LITURGICAL CORNER



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DIRECTOR'S NOTES FOR DEACONS
MAY 2026 | VOL 46

JOHN