



DIOCESE OF FALL RIVER  
OFFICE OF THE  
**PERMANENT  
DIACONATE**



Bishop Edgar  
da Cunha

## DEACON UPDATE

### The Symphony of Our Family Tree



To the glee of many fans, Downton Abbey is being revisited. The storyline of the series speaks of the aristocratic privileges and responsibilities of those who boast of a certain heritage. Not unlike our contemporary example of the English Royal Family, we hear of the blessings and burdens, the successes and failings of family members.

As we have heard the post-resurrection story of the family of faith, we too have seen the witness of blessings and burdens. St. Paul and his companion Barnabas have journeyed to communities inspiring and declaring the power of the Good News of the Risen Christ. As believers they declare that they are truly a royal family.

The family lineage of Jesus is so unique. The privileges and responsibilities of this family is not based on genetics, but the privileges of the family of Jesus, is formed upon being called and fulfilling that call by service.

We take great pride in our family history. However, the tree that marks us as true royalty, son and daughter of God, demands that we nurture, prune and care for the gift we have received and the gift we called to be. The witnessing of Paul and Barnabas bear witness to two important truths: one, trees grow where they are planted and two, they are harvested by caregivers in the name of the ultimate care giver.

Firstly our family history is rooted in life. The family tree extends branches in the Downton Abby of life and in the third floor apartments in Fall Rive and New Bedford. The family tree is celebrated on Wall St. and in the factories of the mills. The hands of family members are the skilled hands of the surgeon and the callous palms of the weaver. The lessons taught by family members are learned in University and are shared at the check out counter of Market Basket. Members of the family wear the finest tailored suits and are the blankets on those who seek shelter on a cold night. Each is part of a royal family, a living family tree. Each member of the family has been embraced by a bath that has made us Son and Daughter. The head of the household washes feet, sits on a throne of a cross and offers us a patrimony of a love that is forever.

Secondly, we are called to nurture, prune and care for the gift we have been given and to do so with a humble heart. Paul and Barnabas have great success. So successful are the pair that we hear in one community they were thought to be gods worthy of sacrifice and praise (Acts 14). The apostolic witness is the invitation to become a living member of the family of the Risen one. Witness is the hard work of nurturing, pruning and caring so that the tree can bear fruit. The family tree of Jesus bears fruit by the witness of those who care and become the stewards of God's life giving spirit, living testimonies of the Risen Christ. Paul and Barnabas while tempted to embrace the acclamation of divinity quickly echo the words of Psalm 115 "not to us O Lord but to your name give glory."

Family members heed the warning of not falling victim to what has been called the "Conductor's Syndrome". The conductor of a symphony controls the tempo, the notes and the individual instruments in the ensemble . The Maestro is a god-like master over the music. Paul and Barnabas know they are not gods nor are they the great Maestro of the music. We are not the masters of the household but are the instruments of the head, Christ the Risen One.

One's family history may be memorialized in a coat of arms, images that depict the uniqueness of that family's heritage. In the center of our crest is the cross of Christ, the head of our household. Hanging from the arms of the cross is a shroud that reminds us of the true Maestro who invites us to sing the song Alleluia. Next time you enter a church look around and see and celebrate with saint and sinner your royal family. Alleluia!

In Christ's love,  
Fr. Bob Oliveira

# THE WIVES' CORNER

*This month's contributor is Elizabeth Porter*



One of the things I have increased awareness of and appreciate as I get older, is how events really impact interpretations of the messages found in many aspects of life, you know, “live and learn”, and how much it impacts what I hear in and process the cyclical, rhythmic readings of the Church. I have, over the past few years really had moments when I find an “Easter egg” in the mass readings for the day.

I mention this because this Easter season finds me laser-focused on the readings from Acts of the Apostles: the work by those in the early Church and what appears to be their absolute commitment to ensuring that the Gospel and the Kingdom of God spread throughout history. All I can keep thinking is about how effectively (not perfectly mind you, but effectively) this has continued to where we find ourselves today. Two thousand plus years later, the messages are just as relevant, they speak to the heart and soul. And, there is no denying that the Gospel has certainly spread throughout the world. (Please do not interpret this as me being

Pollyanna, there are undoubtedly problems the world over in practicing one’s faith, let alone spreading the Gospel. But that is a discussion for another day.)

Six months ago, Gary and I unintentionally started what turned out to be a nomadic journey. We had sold the house that had been our family home for thirty years to move to a different town in Massachusetts. But the new place wasn’t ready yet, it was slated to be ready “in a month”. Construction of the new abode took longer than anticipated owing to multiple reasons, and, voila, six months later, the new place was finally ready for occupancy. During that time, we lived in three locations (pause for a second to imagine the “fun”, of packing, moving, and unpacking the essential items we carried with us three times over six months). While the nomadic life was painful at times, it did provide us with an opportunity to participate in church activities in a total of nine churches, in five different dioceses, in two different countries. We celebrated major Church holidays in churches we had never been in before: Christmas in Blackstone, MA., Palm Sunday in a cathedral in Passau, Germany, and Easter in Uxbridge, MA. Our Ordinary Time, Lent and Advent seasons were spread out over approximately six churches. And, no matter where we went, we were always able to find a welcoming church, even if one does not understand the language, we shared common ground. The cadence, the ritual, the feeling of being among brothers and sisters and feeling at home was very comforting, during a very unsettled time. The people who make up the universal Church brought great comfort to us.

I believe it was this nomadic experience that has led me to be so focused on the birth of the Church during these weeks of the Easter season. It has led me to feel a deep degree of gratitude and appreciation of the effort, work, and extraordinary sacrifice of those who have gone before us, as well as those who help us along our way. I only hope and pray that I do justice to the gifts bestowed on me to help support others in their journey.

## CALLING ALL DEACONS - SHARE YOUR MINISTRY

We'd like to feature articles by our deacons in this newsletter each month. If you would like to share a brief reflection or description of a particular ministry that you are involved in, please let us know and we'll set aside some space for you.

## DEACON MANUAL

The Deacon Manual, developed in conjunction with the Deacon Council has been approved by the Bishop. There are several changes that were made by the USCCB last summer. The new manual will be distributed at the Convocation in June.

## RETIREMENT FROM THE DIACONATE

A reminder, that when you reach the retirement age of 75, please send your request letter to the directors of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate and they will send a letter on to the Bishop on your behalf.

# NEXT DEACON CLASS

## INFO NIGHTS

A series of information nights will be held in the months to come. The final Zoom session will be held on Monday, May 29, 2022 from 7:00 - 8:30 pm. In person sessions will be held on Monday, June 27, 2022 and Sunday, August 14, 2022 from 7:00 - 9:00 pm.

Registration is required and may be completed on our website.

## OTHER DETAILS

Aspirancy begins in September 2022. Academic classes begin in September 2023.

Complete details, including Info Night dates, Aspirancy session dates and applications are available on our website at [fallriverdeacons.com](http://fallriverdeacons.com).

## PULPIT ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE NEXT CLASS

*If possible, perhaps you can present this at your parish in the next several weeks/months.*

My brothers and sisters, my name is Deacon\_\_\_\_\_and as you all know I am a deacon for the Diocese of Fall River. I was ordained in 19xx/20xx and I serve at (Church Name and location). I want to thank Father/Msgr. \_\_\_\_\_ for allowing me to speak to you for a few minutes this morning/evening. I am here is to announce that Bishop Edgar da Cunha has approved the formation of a new deacon class. The class that will be formed, after a period of discernment, will begin academic study in September 2022 and the ordination date will be June 2027.

I would like to share a few important points about the ministry of deacon. We are clergy and through sacred Ordination the deacon becomes a herald of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This "clerical state" occurs during ordination by the laying on of hands by the bishop, a tradition handed down from the Apostles. As a result of the sacramental grace received at that moment, the newly ordained deacons are empowered to effectively fulfill their ministry to serve the people uniquely in the service of liturgy, word, and charity.

The deacon administers Baptism, he protects and distributes the Eucharist at Mass and brings Eucharist to the homebound, he witnesses marriages, he proclaims the gospel, he preaches and encourages the people, and he presides over prayer and officiates at funeral rites.

I know that many men present here today may not be interested in pursuing this ministry and that's OK! However, there might be one or two who have had their interest level peaked and that's good! Because experience shows that for men whose calling is sincere and truly based on a desire to serve, the Holy Spirit provides the charism required to meet the demands of formation. A prayerful approach brings men into an increasingly beautiful experience throughout formation, Ordination and beyond.

For those men who are married, the reception of Holy Orders has enhanced the sacrament of marriage that both he and his wife share.

Progressing through the Rites of Candidacy, Lector, Acolyte and Ordination is a journey. A splendid, yet humbling journey, preparing the way for what Pope Paul II observed about the deacon: "You are meant to be living signs of the servanthood of Christ's Church".

So where do we go from here? Additional details and a preliminary application is available on our website – [fallriverdeacons.com](http://fallriverdeacons.com). An information meeting will be held in June 2018 and will be announced on the website and in the Anchor. The General Information meeting will delve even further into the process of becoming a deacon for the Diocese of Fall River. I will be available after Mass if anyone would like to discuss this with me. I would like to leave you with one thought. Do you know someone who you think would make a good deacon? If you do, tell him. That is what the Holy Spirit may want you to do to get his attention.

May God continue to guide each and every one of you as you prayerfully discern where God is calling you to serve His Church.

# HAPPY ANNIVERSARY



## The 4th Diaconate Class

May 22, 1993



## The 5th Diaconate Class

MAY 24, 1997



## The 6th Diaconate Class

May 18, 2002



## The 9th Diaconate Class

May 18, 2019



## TO BE ORDAINED PRIESTS

Four Transitional Deacons of the Fall River Diocese will be ordained to the Priesthood on June 4, 2022 at St Mary's Cathedral.

To be ordained are Deacons Matthew F. Laird, William O'Donnell III, Gregory Quenneville, and Laurent M. Valliere.

Please keep our brother deacons in your prayers as they begin their service to the Church as priests.

## CEU Reports are now OVERDUE

Please submit your report as soon as possible and save us the time and effort of following up with each person who has not submitted their report in a timely manner.

**Thank you** for taking seriously one of your obligations as a deacon given faculties in our diocese.

CEU Reports are only required of active, Roman Rite deacons.

Thank you!

## FUNERAL POLICY FOR DEACONS

With the recent loss of three of our brothers, it is prudent to review the funeral policy for deacons.

Although not required, it is strongly suggested that each deacon of the diocese should have on file in the Diaconate Office a completed form setting forth his choices and wishes in the arrangement of his wake and funeral at his death.

It is strongly recommended that the deacon discuss these arrangements with his wife and/or other close family members before completing and submitting the form. It is suggested that the copy of the completed form be given to the deacon's spouse and perhaps another close family member, as well. The form can be updated or changed at any time whenever the deacon believes that the circumstances so dictate.

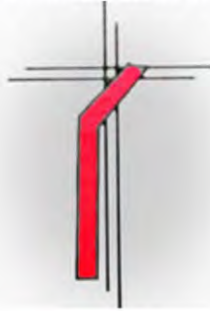
As part of the process in completing this form, the deacon is encouraged to select a deacon/priest who consents to act as the liaison between the family and the diocese.

It will be the function of the selected deacon/priest, not to take charge, but to help coordinate the carrying out of the wake and funeral arrangements of the deacon and his family.

Details and the form may be found under FORMS AND REPORTS in the DEACON PORTAL.

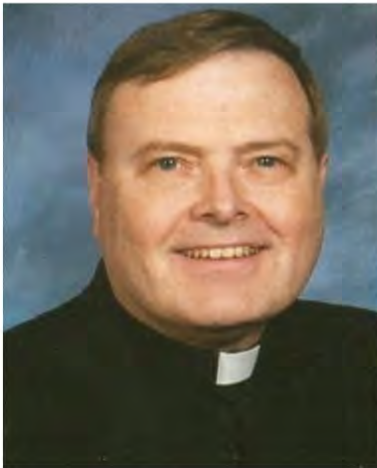
Deacons and Candidates and their spouses invited

Diocese of Fall River Office of the Permanent Diaconate



# Convocation 2022

## **THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY OF DIACONATE MINISTRY AND SERVICE**



### **Fr. George Evans**

- Former Teacher and Rector of St. John Seminary in Boston
- Currently Pastor of Holy Name Church in Boston, MA
- Professor of Spirituality at St. John Seminary and Professor in the Permanent Diaconate Program for the Archdiocese of Boston
- Presently Regional Dean for the Archdiocese of Boston.
- STD from Catholic University of America
- Author of "Understanding the Saints"

**Saturday, June 11, 2022**

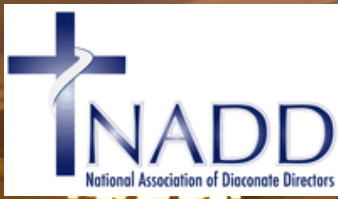
10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Holy Trinity Parish

Fall River, MA

Register at

<https://diocesefr.wufoo.com/forms/deacon-convocation-2022/>



# The Soul of Diaconal Ministry: Union with Christ

## SAVE THE DATE

NADD REGION 1 ASSEMBLY 2022

November 11-12, 2022

Southbridge Hotel and Conference Center  
Southbridge, MA



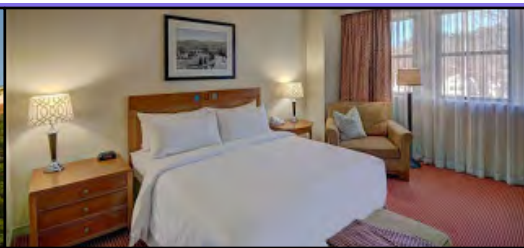
Deacon  
Dominic Cerrato



Father  
Paul Schenck



Deacon  
Art Miller



# SAVE THE DATES!

*We will continue to publish dates as soon as they are available as requested by the Wive's Council. At their suggestion, please cut this out and place on your refrigerator so you won't miss these important events!*

## **CEU Reports Due**

Overdue at this point

## **Convocation**

June 11, 2022

Location Holy Trinity Parish  
Hall, Fall River

## **Installation to Order of Acolyte**

June 21, 2022

Holy Trinity Parish  
Fall River, MA

## **Deacon Retreat**

September 30-Oct 2, 2022

LaSalette Retreat Center  
Attleboro, MA

## **Advent Day of Reflection**

November 19, 2022

Holy Trinity Parish  
Fall River, MA

## **Pre-Ordination Retreat**

March 6-10, 2023

LaSalette Retreat Center

## **Diaconal Ordination**

May 20, 2023

Cathedral of St Mary of the  
Assumption

*\*\*All in person dates are tentative and depend  
on the Covid-19 situation at the time.*

## Birthdays

### MAY

Anthony Cipriano 12  
John Foley 29  
Paul Levesque 8  
John Foley 29  
Joesph McGinley 4  
John Welch 25  
Thomas Souza 6

## Prayer Requests

- Marie Guy - wife of Deacon Mike Guy
- Janice Fitzpatrick wife of Deacon John Fitzpatrick
- Patry Lukac, wife of Deacon Ted Lukac
- Marissa, daughter of Deacon David Boucher
- Michael Wojcik
- William Bazzinotti, the father in law of Candidate Lenny Guyette
- Beverly Spearin, mother of Deacon Paul Spearin

## Office of the Permanent Diaconate

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