



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



Bishop Edgar
da Cunha

DEACON UPDATE



CONVOCATION 2025

SUMMER CONVOCACTIONS



This summer was a time to catch up on reading, attend conferences or convocations, and maybe expand our volunteerism if our schedules are a bit less busy.

One such convocation was held at Stonehill College in Easton on Saturday, June 28, to celebrate Cursillo Retreats and expand awareness to those who have not lived a Cursillo weekend. The Convocation also highlighted “fourth day” opportunities. A Cursillo weekend is a short course in Christianity and includes talks about sacramental grace, ideals, prayer, study, and action. The weekend also includes Mass, the Rosary, and an opportunity for Confession. The food is fabulous — farm-to-table menus created by a very talented full-time chef! The fourth day relates to activities that keep a retreatant, known as a Cursillista, focused on Christ in their lives. These activities include men's and women's prayer groups and Ultrayas to pray for the next group of retreatants. The purpose of these gatherings is to strengthen fellowship, sharing, and spiritual growth.

During this year's Cursillo convocation, Bishop da Cunha led the Rosary, assisted by Convocation attendees, and celebrated Mass to end a spirit-filled day. Another highlight was the keynote address by Catholic author and speaker Brian Pusateri, founder of Broken Door Ministries. Brian offered many interesting points for reflection during his talk. One that was particularly compelling for me related to his discussion of friendship and the following verse:

“Let your acquaintances be many, but one in a thousand your confidant” (Sir 6:6).



Brian emphasized that true friends will help us become closer to Christ and that these friendships may be rare in our lives. I thought about how blessed we are that we draw friendships from our Diaconate Community and our Parishes, and that these friends in faith have a greater advantage to bring us closer to Christ than numerous acquaintances.

Take some time to reflect on those in our lives, family, friends, work colleagues, or others who have been a witness to faith and have been a loyal friend who has brought you closer to Christ. Enjoy the remainder of the summer and prayerfully consider a Cursillo weekend at the Holy Cross Retreat House in Easton if you are not yet a Cursillista!

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 events.

Deacon Retreat 2025

November 7-8 2025

NADD1 REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

November 7-8, 2025

Southbridge, MA

Day of Reflection

December 6, 2025

St Mary's Dartmouth

Deacon Convocation 2026

June 20 2026

Installation as Acolytes

June 23, 2026

Deacon Retreat 2026

October 2-4, 2026

**Pre-Ordination Retreat for
Candidates**

April 9-14, 2027

**Tentative Ordination Date for
11th class**

May 15, 2027

Deacon Convocation 2027

June 19, 2027

DEACON DIOCESAN DALMATICS STILL AVAILABLE



The Deacon Diocesan Dalmatic is now available for purchase. The Office will accept orders at the discounted price of \$125 including shipping. We need a minimum of 10 new orders to receive the discounted price as the first order has been placed.

\$135

includes shipping

Please make checks payable to the Office of the Permanent Diaconate and mail to the office. Other details may be found on the order form.

Our hope is that all deacons will vest in the diocesan diaconate vestments for all events when we gather as a group. If you do not currently have this vestment, please consider discussing this with your pastor and request that they purchase the dalmatic for your use at the parish and at diocesan events.

The order form is available at

<https://diocesefr.wufoo.com/forms/dalmatic-order-form-deacons/>

NEWS YOU CAN USE

12th Diaconate Class Info Nights Announced!

His Excellency, the Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, Bishop of Fall River, has authorized the formation of a new class for Permanent Deacons beginning in the Fall of 2027.

Those interested in pursuing the vocation of the diaconate, scheduled to begin the Aspirancy phase in the Fall of 2027, are invited to submit a preliminary application. Additional details and a preliminary application are available on our website – fallriverdeacons.com.

This general Information meeting will delve into the process of formation of a deacon for the Diocese of Fall River. The info nights will be held at several locations in the diocese and via Zoom-

October 21 – 7:00 pm – St Mary's Dartmouth Parish Hall - Dartmouth

January 27 – via Zoom

February 13, 2026 – St. Ann's Parish Hall - Raynham

April 27, 2026 – via Zoom

If you have any questions, please contact Deacon Frank Lucca or Deacon Joseph McGinley, Co-Directors of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate, office@frpermanentdiaconate.com or contact the Office of the Permanent Diaconate at 508-990-0341.

DEACON IN GOOD STANDING?

As you are all aware by this point, all active deacons in the diocese are required to submit an Annual Report which includes the name of their Spiritual Director, the locations of their annual retreat as well as their CEU report. **This annual report is now overdue.**

We understand the difficulty that many have locating a priest for a spiritual director. We recently met with the Bishop and he is looking at opportunities to assist with this.

All active deacons are required to participate in an annual retreat. The office provides one at no cost to all deacons, but if you do not attend that retreat, you will need to choose another on your own.

Effective immediately, any active deacon who does not submit his Annual Report, will not be considered a deacon in good standing in the diocese nor will then be able to request a move to another parish nor will letters to act as a deacon in another diocese be given. Please submit your Annual Report as soon as possible.

REMINDER- ANNUAL REPORTS NOW WAY OVERDUE

DIDN'T ATTEND THE CONVOCATION?

If you did not attend the 2025 Convocation, which is required of all active deacons, please note the following requirements that must be met this year:

- Attend the Deacon Retreat which will be held in conjunction with the NADD1 Assembly on November 7-8, 2025 in Southbridge. The hotel and assembly fee will be paid by the office.
- Submit a minimum of 36 CEU credits this year. The additional six required CEU credits must be in program attendance such as Day of Reflections etc. If you fail to attend BOTH the Convocation and the NADD1 Assembly, 42 CEU Credits are required in 2025 to remain in Good Standing."

UPCOMING CONVOCATIONS - SAVE THE DATE

Commencing with the 2025 Convocation, please note that all active deacons are **required to attend**. To help you plan, we've announced the dates of the next two Convocations.

CONVOCATION 2026 - JUNE 20, 2026

CONVOCATION 2027 - JUNE 19, 2027

These Convocations will be held at St Ann's Parish in Raynham, MA. Please mark your calendars. Wives are most encouraged to attend as are retired deacons.

LOOKING FOR CONTRIBUTORS TO OUR NEWSLETTER

We are looking for our deacons to contribute to this newsletter. Write an article on a topic of interest. Share a homily. Share best practices. What exciting things are happening at your parish? Review a book that you've read. Evangelization efforts.

Please let Deacon Frank know if you would like to contribute. All submissions should be submitted at least one week prior to the beginning of the month.

FORMATION PROGRAM FOR 11th CLASS VIDEOS

Formation classes for the 11th Diaconate class will resume again in September for their fourth year of formation.

Classes are being recorded and made available for deacons and wives to view through the Deacon Portal on the Permanent Diaconate website. CEUs are available for watching these recordings. Please keep our candidates in your prayers as they continue their journey toward ordination.

IMPORTANT PROCESSES

Deacons requesting retirement should send a letter addressed to the Bishop but **SENT TO THE OFFICE OF THE PERMANENT DIACONATE**. We will review the letter and send it to the Bishop with our recommendation. Mailing directly to the Bishop will only delay the process.

Meet our Deacon Candidates

This month we welcome Joseph Sollecito, parishoner of St Andrew the Apostle, Taunton, MA



My name is Joe Sollecito and my wife (Liz) and I just celebrated our 30th wedding anniversary this past June and we live in Taunton, Massachusetts. Since graduating from Northeastern University (1989), my entire working career has been in the electric power utility industry. I am privileged to be the General Manager of Mansfield Municipal Electric Department in Mansfield, Massachusetts.

I consider myself blessed to have the opportunity to be an 'aspiring' member of this Diaconate class. This calling has been the subject of much prayer and contemplation for over 10+ years. In previous times, we were never convinced that this was the path that the Lord had in mind for us. About half-way through last year's discernment process and through this first semester of this year, a genuine peace has settled upon us as we can now see God's hand in everything leading up to this point. From the program Leaders (Deacons Frank & Joe), teachers, and my fellow classmates, there is a much clearer inspiration to continue this pursuit. I am also inspired by the great bond that has developed between my brother Aspirants throughout this stage.

I always considered myself a Catholic during my youth and young adult years, but my faith lacked a deep personal conviction. Even so, I know God has worked mysteriously in my life.

Soon after graduating college, I was asked by an Associate Pastor in my home parish (St. Ann's in Providence, RI), to be a teacher of the sacrament of confirmation. While very reluctant to do so, I eventually agreed. Since I didn't want to embarrass myself, and mostly out of 'pride', I learned the faith more thoroughly. Years later that priest was removed from ministry, but I can still see how God uses various people and circumstances to be an inspiration to serve Him.

My faith journey took a more purposeful direction during the first years of our marriage when Liz and I experienced a 'life-changing' event, when we were told that there was no (earthly) way we could have children. However, the Lord not only provided a great miracle by allowing us to conceive and give birth to our daughter Alexandria, God also inspired someone to prophesize to us beforehand to let us know that God would do this for us. With such a personal encounter, I have promised to serve Him as best I can in whatever role He leads me to.

These inspirations led me to teach and inspire young people in various capacities over the last 30+ years. Primarily, I have taught the sacrament of confirmation and participated in

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various other youth ministry roles within the Diocese of Fall River at St. Ann's (Raynham), St. Mary's (Taunton), Our Lady of Mt. Carmel (Seekonk), and at St. Andrew the Apostle (Taunton). I have also been blessed with the opportunity to be trained to present various parish Bible studies as developed from the St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology (Dr. Scott Hahn's Applied Biblical Studies program). Additionally, in the past few years, I have also volunteered as an assistant coach for Bishop Feehan's Boys Tennis team and have provide various assistance for the Diocesan youth retreats and conferences.

From these various ministries, Liz and I have been blessed by so many great people who have helped us grow and serve our Lord in surprising ways. With God's grace, I hope to continue this journey and follow through to whatever capacity He leads me.

New Adidas branded deacon shirts

Many have been asking about the Adidas branded deacon shirts. We're happy to announce we have secured a supplier for these shirts in white and grey, both long sleeve and short sleeve with our own logo design.



Short sleeve polo = A430 – Xs-Xlarge embroidered \$43.00, 2x-4x = \$47.00
1/4 zip long sleeve = A401 – Xs- Xlarge embroidered - 59.00, 2X-4X = \$63.00

Orders may be placed on our website - fallriverdeacons.com

THE HOMILIST'S CORNER

This month's contributor is Deacon Joseph McGinley

BISHOP FEEHAN BACCALAUREATE MASS 2025

This homily was given at Bishop Feehan's 2025 Baccalaureate Mass, which happened to fall on a Solemnity – the Ascension of the Lord. My audience consisted of this year's graduating class at Bishop Feehan, along with their parents and relatives and the school's faculty members, staff and administration. My goal was to tie together the message of the day's readings with the significance of the students graduation day. After beginning with a lighthearted observation about the resemblance between the school's chaplain, Father Craig Pregana and Pope Leo, I offered the follow:

Very often, when we gather for Mass at Feehan, our Mercy Day Mass, for example, or our Class Mass, the homilist – either Fr. Craig or myself - is allowed to select the readings and the Gospel for that Mass, and they, in turn, will typically determine the theme of our homily. But today, because it is a Solemnity -the Ascension of the Lord – we are directed to use the Readings and the Gospel selected by the Church. And quite frankly, I don't think there could have been readings more appropriate for a Baccalaureate Mass. And here's why...

Today's First Reading and the Gospel narrative are centered upon, after recounting all Jesus had done, his departure from his Disciples – and, of course, over the last several days, and culminating with tonight's commencement, we have also recalled the great deeds performed by the Class of '25...and then, you will depart from us. In fact, I want to specifically draw your attention to the first reading, from Acts, where we're told that, after Jesus ascends, two angels appear and ask the Apostles, "Men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky?" Recall that immediately before his ascension, Jesus told his disciples that they would be his "witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." In today's Gospel, virtually the same point is made: "that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all nations..."

So, when the angels ask, "Why are you standing there, looking at the sky" in a way, what they're saying is, "What are you doing? Let's go – the clock is ticking – you've got a lot of ground to cover. Move it!"

In a way, it is very similar to when the Mass was celebrated in Latin and the dismissal that was proclaimed was "Ite, Missa est" which translates literally as, "Go! It is sent"...and the word "Mass" means "sending"...so the laity was being told, "Go, get out of here, move it...you are being sent – evangelization does not take place in here, you are being sent out there."

So tonight, we'll gather under the lights, and you'll hear your name called and you'll be given that piece of paper you have worked so hard for...and you'll throw your caps in the air, and you'll gather with friends and family for pictures and you'll hunt down your favorite classmates, the ones with whom you've experienced so much, and then, the stadium lights will be turned off, and the crowd will file out, and ...it will be time for you to go.

Don't get me wrong...we want you to come back and visit us, we want to hear how you're doing, we're all Feehan family...but you need to go – you are being sent.

In Mark 6, we are told how Jesus gathered his disciples and sent them out – ite, missa est – and before they departed, he tells them what they need to bring - a walking stick, sandals, the clothes they were wearing... so I think it would be a great injustice to send you out from Feehan without telling you what to bring.

But there is just one thing that I would like you to take with you as you make your way out into the world. I want you to hold on to the belief, the certain belief, the truth, that every individual you will encounter possesses an intrinsic dignity, an inherent worth, an incalculable value, that must be honored, and never violated. You may disagree with them, you may not even get along with them, that's OK, but you must accept that they have an inherent dignity. That must be the starting point. Everyone – no matter their sex, race, nationality, age, income, sexual orientation, whether they're a person of faith or not – everyone. If you do that, if you really believe that, it will serve to guide you in every encounter you have with someone else for the rest of your life.

Now, I'm going to anticipate two questions...what does honoring another's dignity look like, can you give us

a concrete example? And upon what is our dignity based, from where does it flow? In addressing the first question, I would refer you to John's Gospel - the story of the woman caught in adultery.

We all know the story – a woman is dragged out before the authorities and a mob...and Jesus. And Jesus is told that the woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery...that according to Mosaic Law, she should be stoned to death, and what was Jesus' opinion? And he said, "Let those among you who is without sin, cast the first stone". And gradually, the authorities and the mob drop their weapons and sulk away, until only Jesus and the woman are left. And Jesus asks, "Woman, is there no one left to condemn you?" "No one, sir." "Then neither do I condemn you, go, and sin no more."

We are told that Jesus addresses her as "Woman", but the Greek word that's actually used, in that context, translates to "M'am". She was a sinner, that was a serious offense, and by the religious law at the time, she should have been executed...and the Son of God called her, "m'am". He addresses her in a respectful way, he refuses to condemn her (remember, God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn it, but to save it) but he loves her enough to say, "Go, and sin no more." Instead of "Go, and don't worry about it...it doesn't matter"...because it did. And that's a very concrete example of honoring the other's dignity.

And from where does that dignity flow? From four truths:

1. Everyone has been loved into existence by God – we are all objects of God's love. Jesus told us that "God is Love"... that is all God can do is love – so, because we have been loved into existence by God, and loved by Him for exactly who we are, we all possess an incalculable worth that must be honored.
2. We are made in the image and likeness of God – theologians offer that we image God in that we have free will, intellect and a soul. But there's something else – those of us who are Christian believe in a Triune God – that the inner life of God is relational, it is defined by an eternal exchange of love between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit - so we also image God when we are in communion with others; we are meant to be in relationships - quite simply, we are meant for each other. And so, in those four ways, we image God and therefore, possess an inviolable dignity.
3. The Incarnation – that God, in the person of Jesus Christ, became one of us. As the Church prayed in last night's Evening Prayer, "in surrendering the brightness of his glory, he became man so that we may be raised from the dust to share his very being" - and in doing so, he sanctified our humanity.
4. And finally - someone died for you. God so loved the world, God so loves each one of us, God so loves each person that you will encounter, that he gave his only Son to die on the cross for our redemption and the forgiveness of our sins – and he died on the cross, not just for Catholics, not just for Americans, not just for people of faith – there is no exceptionalism found within the shadow of the cross, we are all sinners, we are all unworthy, but we are all loved unconditionally, and that gives each of us an incalculable worth. That is the truth, and to quote Winston Churchill from another context, "This truth is incontrovertible... Ignorance may deride it, malice may distort it, but there it is."

So, thank you for allowing me to have this time with you and share something about which I am passionate. May God bless and protect you, and, to paraphrase Thomas Merton – may you become the person you were born to be, to fulfill the dream God has for you. Amen.



UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION

Please notify the office with any updates to your contact information by sending an email to Jackie at office@frpermanentdiaconate.com. Thank you!

Birthdays

August

Eduardo Borges 7
Timothy Flaherty 11
Paul Harney 16
George Hults 1
Arthur LaChance 15
David Laird 1
Patrick Mahoney 26
Americo Miranda 3
Leo Racine 7

September

Philip Bedard 2
John Burkly 18
Gary Donahue 19
John Fitzpatrick 24
David Gaspar 8
Peter Guresh 22
Joseph Kane 25
Theodore Lukac 9
Dana McCarthy 13
John O'Brien 18



Prayer Requests

- Sandy Guerra, wife of Deacon Ralph Guerra
- Lynn Buder, wife of Deacon Karl Buder
- Marie Guy - wife of Deacon Mike Guy
- Marissa, daughter of Deacon David Boucher
- Rebecca Gallerizzo - wife of Deacon William Gallerizzo
- Deacon Abilo Pires

If you know of any deacons or family members who are in need of prayers, please visit to website

fallriverdeacons.com

and fill out the form located in the Deacon Portal

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CARRY FORWARD THE WORK OF CHRIST



The NADD1 ASSEMBLY will be the site of our Diocese of Fall River Annual Deacon Retreat
If you haven't registered yet, please do so immediately as the space is limited. Register today at
www.nadd1assembly.org. The event and hotel costs are covered by the office.

NADD REGION 1 ASSEMBLY 2025

November 7-8, 2025

Wellsworth Hotel (formerly Southbridge Hotel and Conference Center)
Southbridge, MA

www.nadd1assembly.org

