

# CATHOLIC HERALD



▲ **CALLED TO SERVE:** What does a deacon do — and what leads a man to answer that call? As the archdiocese prepares to ordain 11 new permanent deacons, we explore the vocation, the ministry and the families who share it. Pages 6-15. (Submitted Photo)

**BUILDING HOPE THROUGH HOMES**

A national Habitat for Humanity initiative inspired by Pope Leo XIV takes root in Milwaukee with seven new affordable homes.

**DEACON WIVES — A SHARED ‘YES’**

For married deacons, the call to ordained ministry also profoundly shapes the lives of their wives and families.

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# Servants of Christ, Stewards of God's Mysteries

To proclaim the Word — serve at the altar — care for the sick — visit the imprisoned. We have among us an unsung group of heroes who serve so quietly and faithfully that unless you know them personally, you're likely to miss them. These servants are our permanent deacons. I have been blessed to know and serve alongside many deacons throughout my years as a priest and bishop. They are "ministers of Christ and the stewards of God's mysteries," called to embody Christ's own spirit of service and love.

In 1991, when I had just been ordained a transitional deacon, I was blessed to work alongside Deacon Terry and his wife, Cathy, in my first assignment at Ss. Faith, Hope and Charity Catholic Parish in Winnetka, Illinois. Deacon Terry embodied the three elements of the diaconate: Word, liturgy and charity. They accompanied me throughout the six years I was at that parish, which helped shape my priesthood and my understanding of parish life. What I learned from them as a newly ordained priest was invaluable to my ministry. I wonder how many deacons throughout time have had the same impact on the people around them.

The history of deacons dates back to apostolic times. If we look at the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 6:1-7), the Twelve make an important decision to "select seven reputable men" whom they would appoint to serve at table. They recognized the need for special helpers to assist in the passing on of the faith. Of course, the word "deacon" was not used, but they set aside these men — consecrated them



## HERALD of HOPE

ARCHBISHOP JEFFREY S. GROB

— to serve as ministers of the Word, liturgy and charity. And so, we see the origin of the diaconate.

Let me be blunt about one point: Deacons are members of the clergy, not afterthoughts or glorified altar boys. Under the papacy of Paul VI, the permanent diaconate was reinstated. Deacons are ordained and strengthened by sacramental grace. They are servants of all, serving the Church in many roles — evangelizers, teachers, sanctifiers, witnesses, guides — all for the sake of the Gospel. As St. John Paul II affirmed in his address to the deacons of the United States in 1987, "This is at the very heart of the diaconate to which you have been called: to be a servant of the mysteries of Christ and, at one and the same time, to be a servant of your brothers and sisters. That these two dimensions are inseparably joined together in one reality shows the important nature of the ministry which is yours by ordination."

These men are often balancing family responsibilities, full-time employment and diaconal formation. Many deacons have sacrificed so much that is not apparent to us when we see them assisting at Mass. They enter a

period of discernment and then make a commitment to three or four years of formation on top of their personal commitments, which is not only commendable but, in many cases, heroic.

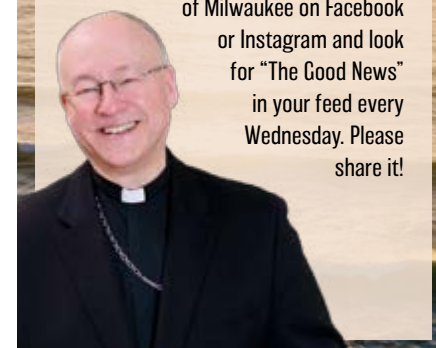
My own experience gave me an early appreciation for deacons, and as archbishop, it is my duty to recognize and affirm the gift our deacons are to this local church.

Please pray for the 11 men featured in this edition of the Herald. I invite you to join me Sept. 12 at 10 a.m. at St. Monica Parish in Whitefish Bay for the ordination of these men to the permanent diaconate. Then please keep them — and all clergy — in your prayers as they take up the mantle of service to the Church.

## The Good News

A weekly encouraging message  
from Archbishop Grob!

Archbishop Jeffrey S. Grob offers a brief weekly video message called "The Good News." Follow the Archdiocese of Milwaukee on Facebook or Instagram and look for "The Good News" in your feed every Wednesday. Please share it!



[www.archmil.org/Good-News](https://www.archmil.org/Good-News)

# Pope Leo Village Takes Root in Milwaukee

## SEVEN HABITAT HOMES PUT FAITH, SERVICE AND AFFORDABLE HOMEOWNERSHIP INTO ACTION

A national effort inspired by Pope Leo XIV's call to serve others is taking root in Milwaukee, where Habitat for Humanity is building seven affordable homes for families in the Bronzeville and Harambee neighborhoods.

Habitat for Humanity Milwaukee launched its local Pope Leo Village project Aug. 21 with a blessing at a construction site in Bronzeville. Auxiliary Bishop Jeffrey R. Haines offered prayers for the project, the volunteers who will help build the homes and the families who will eventually make them their own. Following the blessing, participants were invited to write prayers and blessings on the foundation.

The Milwaukee project is part of a larger Pope Leo Village initiative supported by an anonymous donor inspired by Pope Leo XIV's commitment to service and community. The national effort is expected to support approximately 250 affordable homes in 21 cities while

encouraging young people, schools and faith communities to put that call to service into action through volunteering and fundraising.

Milwaukee Habitat announced its participation in the initiative in January when it said the project would support seven homes to be built during 2026 and 2027. The homes are intended to help local families achieve the stability and long-term benefits of affordable homeownership.

Unlike a traditional home purchase, Habitat homeowners become active partners in the building process. Future homeowners complete sweat-equity hours alongside volunteers and purchase their homes with an affordable mortgage, making homeownership attainable for families who might otherwise be priced out of the market.

For Milwaukee Habitat, the project comes as the organization continues building affordable homes in neighborhoods throughout the city. Its work is rooted in bringing people together to build homes, communities



▲ Auxiliary Bishop Jeffrey R. Haines blesses a Habitat for Humanity home Aug. 21 as part of the Pope Leo Village initiative in Milwaukee. (Submitted photo)

and hope, with homeownership providing families an opportunity for greater stability.

At the Aug. 21 blessing, Bishop Haines connected the physical work of

construction with the spiritual work of service, praying that those involved would “grow in faith and charity” and that the homes would ultimately become places where families can flourish.



(Submitted photo) ▲



▲ St. Catherine's High School celebrates the opening of its new secure entrance and administrative suite with a ribbon cutting Aug. 25 in Racine. Alumni, students, families, staff, donors and community supporters gathered to tour the new spaces, which are part of the school's continuing investment in campus safety and Catholic education.



▲ The former Master Lock corporate headquarters at 6744 S. Howell Ave. in Oak Creek will become the new Mary Mother of the Church Pastoral Center for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. (Photo by Sandra Peterson)

## Archdiocese Finds New Home in Oak Creek

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee has purchased a 120,883-square-foot office campus in Oak Creek that will become the new Mary Mother of the Church Pastoral Center.

The property, at 6744 S. Howell Ave., is the former Master Lock corporate headquarters and will eventually replace the archdiocese's current pastoral center, which has served as its administrative headquarters for 43 years.

Archbishop Jeffrey S. Grob said the current pastoral center has served the archdiocese well but has become costly to maintain and faces substantial deferred maintenance.

"As responsible stewards of the resources entrusted to us, we recognized the opportunity to invest in a facility that is more appropriately sized, more efficient to operate, and better equipped to serve the Church for generations to come," he said.

The new property sits on more than 26 acres and consists of two buildings constructed in 1996 and 2000. The campus includes approximately 850 parking spaces, an auditorium, kitchen and cafeteria areas, meeting and office spaces, and walking trails.

A timeline for the transition to the new pastoral center has not yet been announced.

## Deacon Garden Dedicated in Honor of Deacon Troy Major

St. Francis of Assisi, Milwaukee, dedicated and opened its new Deacon Garden Aug. 22, honoring the men who have served the parish through the permanent diaconate. The garden's inaugural induction recognized Deacon Troy James Major, who was ordained in 2002 and faithfully served St. Francis of Assisi Parish for 16 years.

Major, who died Aug. 30, 2024, was remembered for his compassionate service, gentle leadership and devotion to Christ and the parish community. He is the first deacon to be honored in the garden, which was created as a place of prayer, reflection and remembrance for the deacons who have served the parish and for

future generations to honor their vocation of service.



◀ Marlon Major and his mother, Cleo Major, stand beside the new Deacon Garden at St. Francis of Assisi in Milwaukee. The garden's first honoree is Deacon Troy James Major, Marlon's father, who served the parish for 16 years. (Submitted photo)



▲ St. Eugene School Principal Rebecca Jones, joined by Fr. Jonathon Schmeckel and Eugene the Panther, cuts the ribbon on the school's newly restored gym. The lower level of the school was destroyed by flooding in August 2025, leaving students without a gym or art room for the school year. Students gathered for the ribbon cutting and blessing marking the completion of the yearlong project. (Submitted photo)

# 11 MEN. ONE CALL.

## What Does a Deacon Do?

### CATHOLIC HERALD STAFF

For many Catholics, the most visible answer to the question “What does a deacon do?” comes on Sunday morning.

He proclaims the Gospel. He may preach the homily. He assists the priest at the altar and helps distribute Holy Communion.

But those duties provide only part of the answer.

A permanent deacon is an ordained minister of the Catholic Church, one of the three orders of ordained ministry: bishops, priests and deacons. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops describes the deacon as a sacramental sign of Christ, who came “to serve and not to be served.”

That emphasis on service is central to understanding the permanent diaconate. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee describes the deacon as a consecrated witness to service who brings the presence of Christ and the Church not only into the parish but also into family life, workplaces, schools and the wider community.

A deacon’s service generally takes three forms: the ministries of Word, Liturgy and Charity.

As a minister of the Word, a deacon proclaims the Gospel at Mass and may preach and teach. His ministry can also include catechesis,

sacramental preparation, retreats and evangelization.

His liturgical ministry extends beyond Mass. A deacon can baptize, witness and bless marriages and preside at wakes, funeral rites and burial services that do not include Mass.

The distinctions between a deacon and a priest are important. A deacon cannot celebrate Mass, hear confessions or anoint the sick. The diaconate is not a lesser form of priesthood but a distinct order of ordained ministry.

Nor is a permanent deacon simply a layman who has been given additional responsibilities at his parish. Through the sacrament of Holy Orders, he is ordained for service.

That service often takes a deacon well beyond the sanctuary.

Deacons visit the sick and homebound. They serve in hospitals, nursing homes, hospices and jails. They minister to people in need and help connect the Church with those who might otherwise be overlooked.

Those ministries are evident among the men preparing for ordination to the permanent diaconate in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee this September. Their anticipated ministries include jail and hospice outreach, nursing home ministry, Communion to the homebound,

religious education and sacramental preparation.

Many permanent deacons are also husbands, fathers and working professionals. Deacons bring their ordained vocation into those settings as well — family, work and community.

Becoming a permanent deacon requires substantial preparation. In the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, formation lasts five years — two years of aspirancy followed by three years of candidacy — and includes human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation.

The permanent diaconate has ancient roots but was restored following the Second Vatican Council after centuries in which the diaconate was generally a step toward priesthood. A permanent deacon and a transitional deacon receive the same diaconal ordination; the difference is that a transitional deacon is preparing for ordination to the priesthood, while a permanent deacon remains a deacon.

Ultimately, answering “What does a deacon do?” requires looking beyond what happens at the altar.

The same vocation that sends a deacon to proclaim the Gospel at Mass sends him back into his family, workplace, parish and community to serve.

On Sept. 12, eleven men will answer a call to serve the Church in a new way as they are ordained permanent deacons for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

Their paths to the diaconate are different, but each has been shaped by prayer, discernment and a desire to serve God and his people. Their ministry will take them beyond the altar and into their families, parishes and communities.

**IN THIS SPECIAL SECTION, MEET THE MEN PREPARING TO SAY “YES” TO THIS CALL — AND THE WIVES AND FAMILIES WHO HAVE WALKED ALONGSIDE THEM.**

## CAN A DEACON DO THAT?

### ■ Proclaim the Gospel at Mass? **YES**

This is a particular responsibility of the deacon.

### ■ Baptize? **YES**

### ■ Celebrate Mass? **NO**

A deacon assists the bishop or priest at Mass but cannot celebrate Mass.

### ■ Consecrate the Eucharist? **NO**

### ■ Witness a marriage? **YES**

A deacon may witness and bless marriages, when granted the appropriate faculty.

### ■ Hear confessions? **NO**

### ■ Anoint the sick? **NO**

The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is administered by a priest or bishop.

### ■ Preside at a funeral? **YES**

A deacon may preside at funeral rites that do not include Mass and at burial services.

### ■ Give blessings? **YES**

Deacons may impart blessings permitted to them by the Church’s liturgical books.

### ■ Lead a Communion service? **YES**

A deacon may lead an appropriate celebration in the absence of a priest.

### ■ Bring Communion to the sick and homebound? **YES**

### ■ Be married? **YES**

Married men may be ordained permanent deacons. Generally, an unmarried man ordained a deacon, or a married deacon whose wife dies, may not subsequently marry.

### ■ Become a priest?

A **permanent** deacon is ordained with the intention of remaining a deacon. A **transitional** deacon is ordained to the diaconate as part of his preparation for priesthood. Sacramentally, both are deacons.

*Source: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; Archdiocese of Milwaukee*

# Called to Serve

## CATHOLIC HERALD STAFF

For John Schroeder, it took three invitations.

“The third invitation to consider the diaconate became the turning point,” said Schroeder, a member of St. Jerome Parish in Oconomowoc. “Through the encouragement of others, I began to recognize what God might have been asking of me all along.”

Thomas Brefka experienced something similar. People around him saw something he had not yet recognized.

“Initially, I had a few people tap me on the shoulder and recognize gifts in me that I had not yet seen in myself,” said Brefka, a member of St. James Parish in Franklin. “Through prayer and discernment, I became open to the possibility that God was calling me to something greater than I ever imagined.”

Schroeder and Brefka are among 11 men scheduled to be ordained to the permanent diaconate for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee at 10 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 12, at St. Monica Parish, Whitefish Bay.

They will be joined by Jan Anderson, Kevin Doll, Christopher Lauterbach, John Van Hecke, Justin Spaeth, Marc Bucaro, Rich Fedor, Dylan McHugh and Rene Rillorta.

Their accounts of what brought them to the diaconate are individual, but several describe a call that developed over time and was reinforced by others.

Anderson, of St. Elizabeth Parish in Kenosha, described “a persistent nudge or draw that kept coming back.”

“Other people encouraged me to respond,” he said.

Fedor, a member of St. James Parish, Mukwonago, similarly pointed to “frequent promptings of the Holy Spirit,” which he said were affirmed by others who gave voice to those promptings. They led him to discern that God was calling him more deeply into service to others.

For Doll, service was already a significant part of his life. He spent 30 years with the Fond du Lac Fire Department.

“I always felt the need to serve others,” said Doll, a



▲ The 11 deacons and their wives at their Institution to Acolyte mass this past September 2025. (Submitted photo)

member of Shepherd of the Hills Parish. “I felt the Blessed Mother leading me toward the diaconate for the last decade.”

Service also figures prominently in how other members of the class describe their calls.

Lauterbach, a member of St. Theresa Parish in Eagle, said he wanted to do more to serve God.

“I felt that God called me to make a true commitment, not just an empty promise,” he said.

McHugh, a St. Stephen parishioner in Oak Creek, connected his call with the people already in his life.

“I felt a strong call, as young man with a family, not only to serve the vulnerable and forgotten but to help others know, serve and love God,” he said. “My desire is to be a servant to the people of God starting with my family, my students and my community.”

The men will enter ministries as varied as the paths that brought them to ordination.

Members of the class anticipate bringing Holy Communion to people who are homebound and in hospitals, hospices and assisted living facilities. Others include jail and nursing home ministry, marriage preparation, religious education, OCIA, preaching and sacramental preparation among the areas in which they expect to serve.

Van Hecke, a member of St. Charles Parish in Hartland, plans to work in special needs sacramental preparation and formation as well as bring Communion to the sick and homebound.

His own discernment grew from the example of people who had helped bring him to Jesus throughout his life. When he began trying to imitate them while guiding his children and others, particularly through his work as a Catechesis of the Good Shepherd catechist, he said he became aware that he was being offered “the gift and grace of the diaconate to bring Jesus to people.”

Spaeth, a member of St. John Evangelist and Blessed Trinity parishes in the Sheboygan area, described his path in terms of continuing discernment.

“A desire to discern God’s will for my life led me to the diaconate,” he said. “The call to serve led me to continue in humility, and God kept on opening doors through which I stepped in faith.”

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee describes discernment for the diaconate as beginning before a man formally contacts the Diaconate Formation Office. Men considering the vocation are encouraged to make discernment part of their daily prayer and discuss it with their wives, pastors and others in their lives.

For the 11 men approaching ordination, that period of discernment is nearing a milestone.

Their ministries will take them to different communities and different people. But their descriptions of how they arrived at ordination repeatedly return to a common idea: hearing a call and responding through service.

## Congratulations Deacon Kevin!

Rejoicing with you on your  
ordination to the diaconate.  
May God continue to guide you in  
your life of service.

PARISHIONERS AND STAFF OF SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS



Saint Stephen Catholic Church  
joyfully congratulates  
**Deacon Dylan McHugh**  
on his ordination to the diaconate.

*May God guide and  
bless you as  
you serve His Church  
with faith, humility, and  
joy.*



Deacon Chris, your fellow parishioners at St. Theresa of Avila Parish in Eagle, together with all the members of the Southern Moraine Parishes, celebrate God's goodness with joyful congratulations on your ordination to the diaconate.



May God bless you abundantly  
in your new ministry.



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR  
NEWEST DEACON,  
**JUSTIN SPAETH.**

MAY THE LORD BLESS YOU AND YOUR  
FAMILY AS YOU START YOUR MINISTRY  
HERE AT ST. JOHN EVANGELIST AND  
BLESSED TRINITY PARISHES.

## Jan Anderson - St. Elizabeth Parish, Kenosha



Jan Anderson describes his call to the permanent diaconate as something that would not go away.

"There was a persistent nudge or draw that kept coming back," he said. "Other people encouraged me to respond."

Anderson lives in Kenosha with his wife, Michelle, and belongs to St. Elizabeth Parish. Their children are Bryan Daugherty, Kegan Daugherty, John Anderson, Ian Anderson, Charles Anderson and Margaret Anderson.

Anderson works as Midwest area manager for J&J Portable Sanitation Products LLC.

He anticipates a broad range of diaconal service, including preaching, weddings, funerals, homebound ministry, teaching and assisting at Mass. He expects that service to take place both within his parish and outside its walls as needs arise in the community.

For his Scripture passage, Anderson selected John 1:14: "And the Word

became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth."

His first Mass assisting as an ordained deacon is scheduled for Sept. 13 at St. Elizabeth.

And there is at least one considerably less serious detail parishioners might discover about their new deacon: Anderson prefers to wear red socks.

## Thomas Brefka - St. James Parish, Franklin

Thomas Brefka did not initially recognize in himself the gifts that others saw.

"I had a few people tap me on the shoulder and recognize gifts in me that I had not yet seen in myself," he said.

Prayer and discernment followed.

"I became open to the possibility that God was calling me to something greater than I ever imagined," Brefka said.

Brefka and his wife, Claire, live in Franklin and belong to St. James Parish.

Their children are Elizabeth, Caryn, Alex and Ben.

Brefka is director of mission and pastoral care at Clement Manor in Greenfield.

His anticipated diaconal ministry includes pastoral care to older adults, service to those in need and marriage preparation. He expects to serve at Clement Manor, St. James Parish and through the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

Brefka selected Micah 6:8 as his

Scripture passage, with its call "to do justice and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God."

His first Mass assisting as an ordained deacon is scheduled for 10 a.m. Sept. 13 at St. James in Franklin.

Brefka also loves to sing. He played Tevye in "Fiddler on the Roof" in high school and said he would welcome the opportunity to play the role again now that he is older.



## Marc Bucaro - St. Joseph Parish, Big Bend



Marc Bucaro summarizes what led him toward the permanent diaconate in a few words: "A desire to serve God and the Church, in a manner he wills for my life."

Bucaro and his wife, Megan, live in Waterford and are members of St. Joseph Parish in Big Bend. They have seven children and Bucaro works in construction.

His anticipated diaconal ministry will include nursing home ministry and visits to the homebound, catechesis for OCIA and assisting the priest or bishop at the altar.

He expects to perform that service at St. Joseph Parish and in the surrounding community.

For his Scripture passage, Bucaro selected the words of Simon Peter in

John 6:68: "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

His first Mass assisting as an ordained deacon is scheduled for Sept. 19 at St. Joseph Parish in Big Bend.

Asked to share something about himself that people might not know, Bucaro offered another answer notable for its simplicity: Green has been his favorite color for his entire life.

## Kevin Doll - Shepherd of the Hills Parish, Eden



Service was already familiar to Kevin Doll long before he began formation for the permanent diaconate.

"I always felt the need to serve others," Doll said.

He spent 30 years with the Fond du Lac Fire Department. But Doll also describes another influence on his eventual vocation.

"I felt the Blessed Mother leading me toward the diaconate for the last decade," he said.

Doll and his wife, Dawn, live in Mount

Calvary and have six children: Zachary, Bethany, Kayla, Sarah, Michael and Maria. He is a member of Shepherd of the Hills Parish and works as a dairy goat farmer.

His anticipated ministry includes serving at the altar, participating on the evangelization committee, helping parents prepare for their children's Baptisms, assisting with OCIA, ministering to the homebound and helping lead the community retreat hosted at Shepherd of the Hills. He expects to serve in the parish and nearby

communities.

Doll has also been part of the Schoenstatt Movement for 20 years. In 2025, he had the opportunity to visit Schoenstatt, Germany.

He selected Matthew 13:23, the passage describing the seed sown on rich soil that hears and understands the word and bears fruit, as his Scripture passage.

Doll's first Mass assisting as an ordained deacon will be at 8:15 a.m. Sept. 13 at Shepherd of the Hills Parish in Eden.

Rich Fedor describes his path to the permanent diaconate as involving both the movement of the Holy Spirit and the people around him.

"Frequent promptings of the Holy Spirit, affirmed by others who were willing to give voice to these promptings," led him to discern that God was calling him more deeply into service to others throughout his life, Fedor said.

Fedor and his wife, Megan, live in

Vernon and are members of St. James the Less Parish in Mukwonago. Their children are Natalia and Luka. Fedor is director of Respect Life Ministry for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

As a deacon, he anticipates bringing Communion to the homebound and participating in hospice ministry. He expects to serve the parishes in his cluster as well as assisted living, memory care and senior living facilities in the community.

## Rich Fedor - St. James the Less Parish, Mukwanago

Fedor selected Galatians 6:2 as his favorite Scripture passage: "Bear one another's burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ."

His first Mass assisting as an ordained deacon will be at 10:30 a.m. Sept. 13 at St. James the Less in Mukwonago.

One of Fedor's interests also has a family connection: He enjoys landscaping projects, something he frequently did with his father.



## Christopher Lauterbach - St. Teresa of Avila Parish, Eagle



Christopher Lauterbach's explanation of what led him to the diaconate is straightforward.

"I wanted to do more to serve God," he said. "I felt that God called me to make a true commitment, not just an empty promise."

Lauterbach and his wife, Christy, live in Eagle and belong to St. Theresa of Avila Parish. Their children are Jennifer, Dean and Erika. He works as a customer service representative.

His anticipated diaconal service will take him outside the parish as well as within it. He plans to participate in jail ministry and homebound ministry and lead Communion services at assisted living facilities. He expects to serve in Mukwonago, Walworth County, East Troy and Eagle.

For his Scripture passage, Lauterbach chose a verse that echoes the idea of listening for God's call. In 1 Samuel 3:9,

Eli tells Samuel that if he is called again, he should answer, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."

Lauterbach's first Mass assisting as an ordained deacon is scheduled for 4:30 p.m. Sept. 12 at St. Theresa of Avila.

Away from ministry and work, Lauterbach has another accomplishment to his name: He once won a chili cookoff contest for making the spiciest chili.

## Dylan McHugh - St. Stephen Parish, Oak Creek



Dylan McHugh sees his call to the permanent diaconate in connection with the vocations and responsibilities already present in his life.

"I felt a strong call, as young man with a family, not only to serve the vulnerable and forgotten but to help others know, serve and love God," he said.

"My desire is to be a servant to the people of God starting with my family, my students and my community."

McHugh and his wife, Emily, live in

Oak Creek with their four children, Rory, John, Blair and Lila. They are members of St. Stephen Parish, and he teaches high school social studies at Franklin High School.

His anticipated diaconal ministry will include service in nursing homes and jails.

Asked about a favorite Scripture passage, McHugh selected Matthew 9:37-38, in which Jesus tells his disciples that the harvest is abundant but the laborers are few and instructs

them to ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers.

McHugh is also an avid reader, although he said that interest did not develop until his mid-20s. Another passion that came later in his life was singing, something he said many people who know him probably don't know he enjoys.

His first Mass assisting as an ordained deacon will be at 4:30 p.m. Sept. 12 at St. Stephen in Oak Creek.

## Rene Rillorta - St. John the Evangelist Parish, Greenfield

Rene Rillorta points to the example of the saints in describing what helped lead him to the permanent diaconate.

His love of the Church, he said, was inspired by saints including St. John Paul II and the North American Martyrs.

Rillorta and his wife, Jona, live in Greenfield and belong to St. John the Evangelist Parish. Their children are Kathirene, Jianna and Frances. He works as a physical therapist.

His anticipated ministry encompasses several aspects of diaconal service. He expects to bring Communion to the homebound, assist at Mass and serve at marriages, funerals and blessings, as well as wherever diaconal service is needed. He expects to serve at St. John the Evangelist.

Asked for his favorite Scripture passage, Rillorta selected Romans 8:35-37, which asks what can separate Christians from the love of Christ and

concludes that "in all this, we are more than conquerors because of him who has loved us."

His first Mass assisting as an ordained deacon will be Sept. 12 at St. John the Evangelist in Greenfield.

Outside of his professional and parish life, Rillorta builds Lego sets, plays guitar and enjoys 1980s new wave and alternative music. He is also a "Star Wars" fan.



## John Schroeder - St. Jerome Parish, Oconomowoc



For John Schroeder, the third invitation to consider becoming a deacon made the difference.

"Through the encouragement of others, I began to recognize what God might have been asking of me all along," he said.

Schroeder and his wife, Kara, live in Oconomowoc and are members of St. Jerome Parish. They have four children: Madeline, Peter, Molly and Tim. Professionally, Schroeder is a medical device sales representative.

Following ordination, his diaconal ministry will focus on bringing Holy Communion to people who are homebound and those in hospitals and hospice. He expects to serve the St. Jerome Parish community and people in homes, hospice and hospitals in the Oconomowoc area.

Schroeder selected Romans 8:28 as his most meaningful Scripture passage: "We know that God makes all things work together for good for those who love him and who are called according to his purpose."

One thing people might not know about him is that Schroeder was 22 before he took his first commercial airline flight.

Schroeder said his path to the diaconate ultimately required recognizing what others had already encouraged him to consider — that God might be calling him to ordained service.

His first Mass assisting as an ordained deacon will be Sept. 12 at St. Jerome Church.

## Justin Spaeth - St. John Evangelist Parish, Kohler; Blessed Trinity Parish, Sheboygan Falls



For Justin Spaeth, discernment has been central to his path to the permanent diaconate.

"A desire to discern God's will for my life led me to the diaconate," he said. "The call to serve led me to continue in humility, and God kept on opening doors through which I stepped in faith."

Spaeth and his wife, Michele, live in the Kohler-Sheboygan Falls area. Their children are Joseph, Desiree and Milana.

He is a member of St. John Evangelist Parish and Blessed Trinity Parish and serves as pastoral associate at both parishes.

His anticipated ministry as a deacon includes bringing Communion to the homebound, religious education and preaching. Spaeth said he will serve as a deacon in the parishes and communities where he already works as a pastoral associate.

For his Scripture passage, Spaeth

selected Matthew 25:40: "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me."

His first Mass assisting as an ordained deacon is scheduled for 4 p.m. Sept. 12 at St. John Evangelist in Kohler.

Service also played a role in another important part of Spaeth's life. He met Michele while the two were participating in a service retreat as students at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville.

John Van Hecke credits the example of others with helping lead him toward the permanent diaconate.

"Many, many people have helped bring me to Jesus through word and example throughout my life," he said.

Van Hecke said that when he began imitating those examples in guiding his own children and others — particularly through his service as a Catechesis of the Good Shepherd catechist — he became aware that he was being offered "the gift and grace of the diaconate to bring Jesus to people."

Van Hecke and his wife, Alicia, live in Hartland and are members of St. Charles Parish. Their children are Jacinta, Matthew, Angela, Christina, Brigid and Dominic. They also have a grandson, Johnny. Van Hecke is an electrical engineer.

His anticipated ministry includes special needs sacramental preparation and formation and bringing Communion to the sick and homebound. He expects to serve at St. Charles and in the surrounding Hartland area, including

homes and assisted living facilities.

He selected Psalm 115:1 as his Scripture passage: "Not to us, Lord, not to us but to your name give glory because of your mercy and faithfulness."

Van Hecke's first Mass assisting as an ordained deacon will be at 5 p.m. Sept. 12 at St. Charles.

He has also been an amateur photographer and developer since high school and operated his own chemical-bath developing lab as part of his college work-study experience.



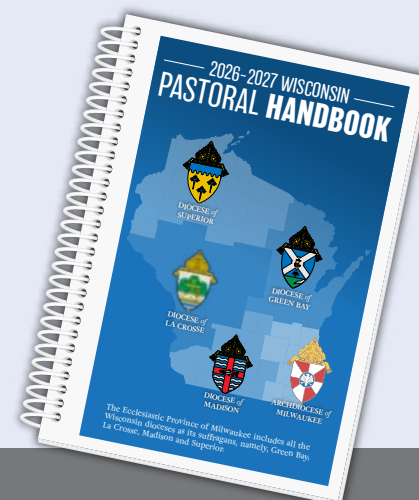
## John Van Hecke - St. Charles Parish, Hartland

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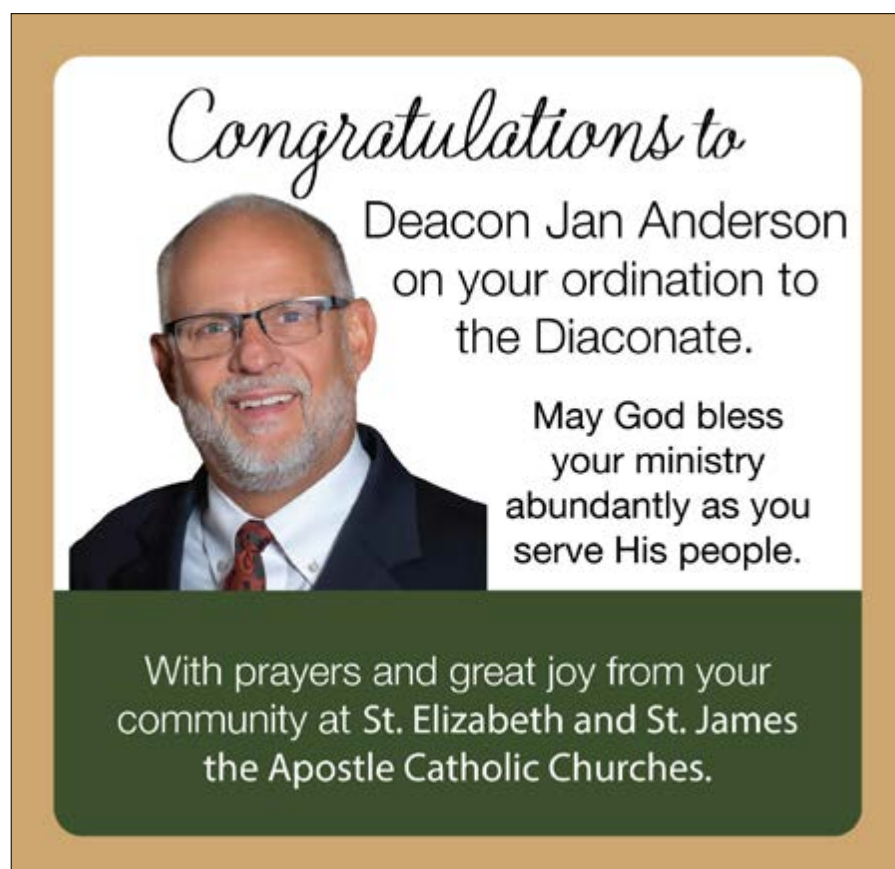
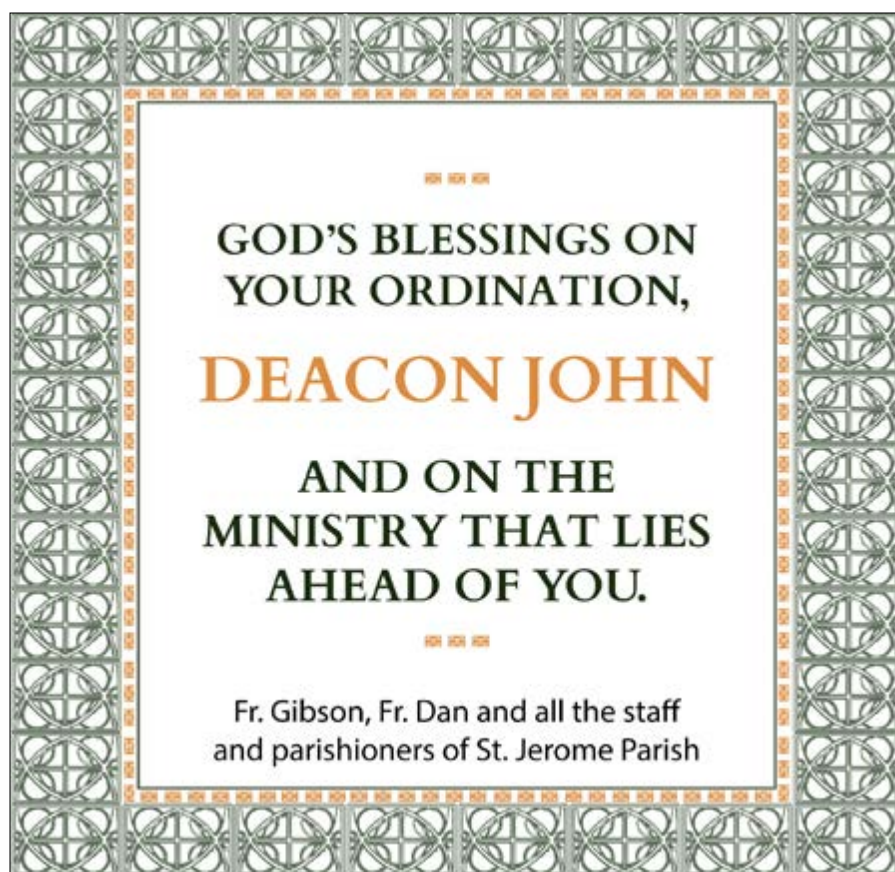
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# A Shared 'Yes' to the Diaconate

WIVES WALK ALONGSIDE THEIR HUSBANDS ON THE JOURNEY TO ORDINATION

COLLEEN JURKIEWICZ  
SPECIAL TO THE CATHOLIC HERALD

On Sept. 12, when Chris Lauterbach is ordained a permanent deacon, it's his face that will be pressed against the marble of the sanctuary floor at St. Monica Parish in Whitefish Bay, his head upon which the archbishop will lay hands and his soul which will undergo the ontological transformation as he receives the sacrament of Holy Orders.

There's no doubt about it: Chris is the one who received the call. But discerning that call and answering it would deeply involve his wife, Christy, as well.

As the couple attended their first discernment session about the permanent diaconate, "I really didn't know what it entailed," said Christy Lauterbach. But the entire time, "I'm thinking, boy, this really sounds like something that would be right for Chris. I think we could do this."

After the session, he asked what she thought.

"I said, 'It was very informative. What did you think?'" she recalled. "He said, 'I think we could do this.'"

Deacon candidates' wives must discern the same as deacon candidates themselves, said Alicia Van Hecke, wife of Chris Lauterbach's classmate John Van Hecke.

"The wives are given a lot of support during the formation process to help with this discernment. And for me, in prayer, my 'yes' came before understanding how to go about saying yes, and I have to admit that saying yes — which was more of a process than a one-time thing for me — was still scary for a time," she said.

Megan Fedor has always believed that marriage is not a "50-50" equation — it's "51-51."

"There are going to be times where your spouse can't give their full 50 percent, so you need to be ready to kick in your additional percentage and carry through whatever is going on," she said.

When her husband, Rich, who will be ordained alongside John Van Hecke and Chris Lauterbach Sept. 12, first approached her with an interest in the diaconate, "I told him, 'If this is what you really, truly

feel called to do, then you've got my 51 percent.'"

The four-year formation process undergone by future deacons has not been without sacrifices for their wives and families, most notably when it comes to time. For the first trimester, the wives attended Saturday classes alongside their husbands, and periodically thereafter. It was a considerable commitment, especially for those families with young children — but Fedor said that she feels it is optimal for her two children, ages 13 and 10, to be able to witness their father's journey while they are still young and so intricately connected with it.

The family has often visited Rich at the full-day Saturday workshops, attended Mass with him and had lunch together. "I think it really is more impactful that they actually get to witness this versus if they were in college," she said.

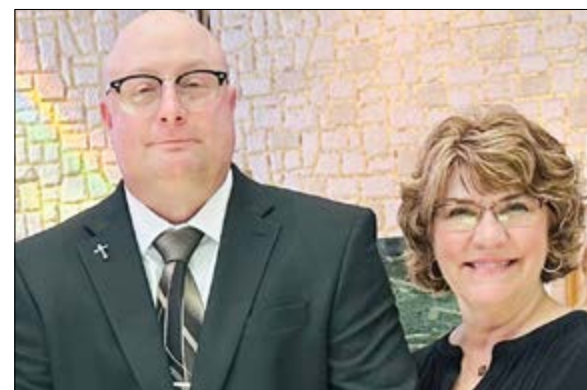
Alicia Van Hecke learned that formation also afforded unexpected time together for herself and her husband.



▲ Deacon candidate John Van Hecke and his wife, Alicia, have shared in the discernment and formation leading to ordination. (Submitted photo)

"I'm a huge nerd and especially love learning about the faith. I attended and studied for all of the classes I could," she said. "It was also the perfect opportunity to spend more time with my husband: in class, driving to and from class, praying and studying together."

During formation, the Lauterbachs undertook several ministry projects together. The experience deepened their individual identities as disciples, but also their own bond as a team. One of these ministries



▲ Chris and Christy Lauterbach have found that diaconate formation has strengthened their marriage and shared ministry. (Submitted photo)

was bringing the Eucharist to the homebound, and they grew close with an elderly couple they regularly visited — so much so that the couple called them in the middle of the night with a medical emergency.

Without so much as a thought, the Lauterbachs ran over to the couple's house to give them assistance. Afterward, they sat in the car, talking about the experience of being invited into the sacred space of people's most vulnerable moments.

"Chris said, 'I feel like we are where we should be. And I'm glad that we're doing this together,'" said Christy Lauterbach. "We're a really good team when we minister together."

"The (formation) process made it very clear to both of us that our marriage needs to be a priority," said Van Hecke. "There is an intentionality about it for both of us that brings a lot of unity and peace and joy."

The Fedors' young daughter has been calling Rich "Future Deacon Daddy" for a while now, so the level of excitement in their household is high — but Megan Fedor is trying to take time to savor the experience, not "fixate" on the future.

"It's going to be very different seeing him up on the altar wearing his dalmatic. I'm trying not to think about it too much because I want to have that moment in that moment."

Christy Lauterbach quoted Director of Deacon Formation Dale Nees in describing her husband's ordination as "a sending, not an ending."

"I don't know if 'excited' is the right word for what we're feeling right now. I think we just feel very blessed, and we're very emotional," she said. "He says, 'I just want to start doing deacon stuff.'"



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# What I Saw at Franciscan

Last week, I went to Ohio to drop off my brother for his first year at Franciscan University. It was a striking experience for me on a couple of fronts. The first and most noticeable thing was visiting the school that had formed some very dear friends and a few of the most important mentors of my life. There were tiny details as well as core values on display there that were so familiar to me. I realized that, among people who did not attend Franciscan, an unusual amount of my formation comes from the spirituality and practices of this place.

There are lots of times and places where people will give you a sales pitch for their approach to the world. At a freshman orientation, the sales pitch aspect might be a little toned down, but there were still a lot of claims being made about how much this place will shape its students for the rest of their lives. It was a unique experience to hear these claims through the lens of my experience with particular graduates of this school. There is no place that is perfect. There is no school or rule of life that will keep out brokenness, let alone guarantee holiness. Franciscan is no exception. But there is something that has happened there that did form some of the people who had the most profound impact on my life. Not every graduate of Franciscan moves through the world like they do. But the way they move through the world was impacted and formed by what they learned there.

As I noticed more and more of these strangely familiar things, I started to look for commonalities between the two men, both graduates of this school, who have had the most dramatic impact on my growth as a



**YOUNG ADULT**  
JACINTA VAN HECKE

person. The two are very different from each other, but they both are comfortable and confident with the specificities of who they are. They have accepted both their strengths and their weaknesses, and while they are always seeking to grow, they act like who they are is who God created them to be. They make the people around them feel seen and valued and, from that, empowered to be uniquely who they are. Said another way, these men both really do act like they are beloved sons of the Father. And from that foundation, they are able to treat every individual person they meet like a beloved child of the same Father. That might sound basic, but I've been around a lot of Catholics and not all of them know how to live this way. But the people who do live this way, who keep Christ at the center of their lives and ground their lives in the reality of being the beloved child — those are the people who change the world.

With all of this in mind, here are a few of my favorite things from my visit to Franciscan:

1. Learning about the 'Households' model. My brother told me an abbreviated version of the story of Fr. Michael Scanlan and his quest to shift Franciscan from one of the top party schools in the country to a truly Catholic

university. This started with spending a considerable length of time with the students, simply observing. From this time, his conclusion was that the deepest problem was loneliness, and from that conclusion, the household model was born. Households at Franciscan are groups of men or women who have made shared commitments to prayer and community, shaped around a particular charism or spirituality. The idea is to bring students into deep relationship with each other, forming a core group of friends who will know you intimately and be there for you in a unique way for the rest of your life. What I have heard from some of my friends matches this claim about how much households change lives.

For someone on the outside, I love the insight of saying the first problem is loneliness. Rather than jumping first to the judgements on problematic behaviors, understanding that loneliness is a root cause opens up profound possibilities for change. And with that, the practicality of choosing a household that matches your unique spirituality encourages an understanding of the diversity of gifts and callings that exist within the Body of Christ.

2. Something the dean of humanities said in a panel. He brought up the idea that, "It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it" and expounded on it. He said that if an idea has made a significant impact on the world, it is because it is insightful about something, no matter how many distortions it may also contain. He

said that it is worth spending time understanding these ideas and that doing so will make you more patient and humble, wiser and ultimately more human.

3. The way that the staff consistently addressed the new students — it was relational and welcoming. While there was plenty of information covered, the speakers kept returning to the individual experience of the new students, offering advice and encouragement that felt rooted in a deep belief of their worth and dignity as well as a real understanding of what they needed to be told at the beginning of this new chapter.

Again, I want to be clear that I am no kind of expert on this school and am not speaking from any degree of authority. Though graduates of Franciscan have played an outsized role in my formation, those people are not avatars or one-dimensional outputs of this education. Franciscan is only one component of their own formation and how they came to be the people that they are. But it was beautiful to see a place that had formed them and to reflect on the specific characteristics of a community that would form the people who so deeply changed my life.

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▲ Priests lay hands on the three Carmelite ordinands during the Aug. 15 ordination Mass at Holy Hill. The laying on of hands is part of the Rite of Ordination to the priesthood. (Photo by seancsmithphotos.com)



▲ Newly ordained Carmelite priests Fr. Isaiah, OCD, Fr. Moses, OCD, and Fr. John-Magdalene, OCD, pose with Archbishop Jeffrey S. Grob following their Aug. 15 ordination at the Basilica and National Shrine of Mary Help of Christians at Holy Hill. (Photo by seancsmithphotos.com)

## Three Carmelites Ordained at Holy Hill

Three Discalced Carmelites were ordained to the priesthood Aug. 15 at the Basilica and National Shrine of Mary Help of Christians at Holy Hill.

Archbishop Jeffrey S. Grob presided at the ordination Mass for Fr. John-Magdalene, OCD, Fr. Isaiah, OCD, and Fr. Moses, OCD, members of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Province.

The newly ordained priests returned to the Basilica the following day to celebrate their first Masses. Fr. Moses celebrated at 8 a.m., Fr. John-Magdalene at 10 a.m. and Fr. Isaiah at 2 p.m.

The ordination drew family, friends, fellow Carmelites and faithful to Holy Hill for the celebration.



▲ Two incoming students display signs welcoming them as St. Lawrence Hilltoppers after receiving scholarships through the St. Lawrence Scholars Program. The merit-based program at St. Lawrence Seminary High School in Mount Calvary provides new students with an \$8,000 annual scholarship that can be renewed each year. Nearly half of the incoming freshman class received the scholarship in the program's first year. (Submitted Photos)



▲ St. Dominic Catholic Parish, Brookfield, celebrated 70 years of parish life Aug. 8, the Solemnity of its patron saint. The anniversary celebration included a Eucharistic procession through the neighborhood, Mass and a parish picnic, bringing parishioners together to honor seven decades of faith and community. (Photo courtesy of St. Dominic Catholic Parish)

# When Connection Isn't Enough

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness ... it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair ... we had everything before us, we had nothing before us."

Charles Dickens' opening lines in "A Tale of Two Cities" could just as readily be a description of the lives many lead today. Amid abundance, many lead lonely lives. Connected to thousands via social media, they pass their evenings endlessly flipping through YouTube videos all the while feeling unconnected and alone. And the worst thing is, they don't know why.

The abundance of such loneliness among so many is what moved Arthur Brooks to write "The Meaning of Your Life," subtitled "Finding Purpose in an Age of Emptiness." Brooks is a social scientist and Harvard professor as well as one of the world's leading authorities on happiness.

Aware of the rapid technological, cultural and economic changes that have rewired our brains, Brooks seeks to offer a way out of the malaise, drawing upon the world's great philosophers and the world's faith traditions, at times making reference to his own Catholic tradition. In a sense, he's not writing anything new. It's just been forgotten.

We only need to scan the chapter titles of Brooks' book to realize his conclusions echo the wisdom of Jesus: Give Your Heart Away, Transcend Yourself, Look for Your Calling, Don't Waste Your Suffering. This week's letter of St. Paul to the Church in



## SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

FR. JOSEPH J. JUKNIALIS

### TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Ezekiel 33:7-9  
Romans 13:3-10  
Matthew 18:15-20

Rome says it more succinctly and in a more familiar fashion, "Owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another." In other words, if you're lonely and don't know why, care for someone else.

We are created to be in relationship with one another. Something is sadly amiss when many live in loneliness, when the young have an abundance of opportunities before them but are starved for meaning and have no idea why, when the biggest dream is to make one's first million by the age of 30,

when retirement's only goal is to live life in the style to which one has grown accustomed. When these are the role models and ideals proposed for those embarking upon life, yes, something is amiss. Somewhere along the way we have forgotten that we are meant to care, to walk with one another, to live life beyond the boundaries of our own homes, even to sacrifice ourselves for the good of another.

All of which brings us to this week's Gospel. There are some who will hear this Gospel as encouraging us to go about correcting others of their faults, misdeeds and shortcomings. "Go tell him his fault," is how the Gospel puts it. And if they do not listen, then take someone else along to serve as a witness to their stubbornness. If still they do not change their ways, then to bring it to the Church, counsels the Gospel.

All of that, however, may seem to miss the point, for the Gospel's opening line is, "If your brother (fellow believer) sins against you, go tell him his fault between the two of you." In other words, go, take the initiative and try to be reconciled, even if we are the one who has been harmed. What makes it so difficult is that it all goes contrary to

our expectation, for we think that the one who has harmed us should take the initiative to come and apologize. The Gospel is not suggesting that we take the blame for the harm done, but rather that harmony is so essential that we are encouraged to take the first step, to seek the healing lest we live lives of alienation and loneliness. Living in peaceful relationship with one another is that important.

Perhaps that is why Brooks' work has resonated with so many people. It gives contemporary language to an ancient truth: We do not overcome loneliness electronically but by flesh and blood with the Spirit as our bond. Nor do we discover happiness by turning inward, but by giving ourselves away in love. It is the wisdom of Jesus himself, reminding us that the cure for loneliness is not simply more connection but deeper communion — with God and with one another.

### FOR REFLECTION

- On a scale of 1 to 10, how much time do you spend on social media and YouTube?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how lonely are you?

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# In the Heart of a Mother

Many students have already begun, or will soon begin, a new school year. This time of year usually brings a mixture of excitement and anxiety: excitement about new friends, new experiences and new things to learn but anxiety about performance, expectations and “fitting in.” My recent experience of watching my two youngest sons make their Marian consecration sheds a beautiful light upon the road ahead.

## A Path We All Walk

Much of life unfolds in repeating patterns of joy and stress: joy over what is new and exciting, and stress over what is uncertain and unplanned. One reassuring thing for today’s students to remember is that countless generations have reached this same moment in their lives and made it through, from one room schoolhouses to enormous university lecture halls. They not only survived but eventually thrived.

I encourage young people to ask their parents and grandparents what the first day of school was like when they were the same age. You may be surprised by how many feelings and experiences you share with them. At the same time, you will discover parts of their lives that differ remarkably from your own. When I asked my father about attending school in the early 1940s, for example, he told me that he walked there barefoot and put on his shoes only after he arrived so that he would not “ruin” his good shoes on the rocks along the way. What a strange idea that was to me! I would have thought the shoes were supposed to protect his feet from the



## FAITH AND FAMILY

DEACON HENRY REYES

rocks. But in his generation, money for shoes, and for many other basic necessities, was difficult to come by.

Young people, listen to the older generations. Their stories can be like good books, filled with adventure, unfamiliar worlds and strange and memorable characters. Their lives also remind us that the road before us is not entirely new. Others have traveled it before us, and we do not walk it alone.

## Mary Walks with Us

My youngest sons are twins, and they recently made a consecration to Mary called the Covenant of Love through the Schoenstatt Boys’ Group. In many ways, they have been preparing for this consecration for six years. They have been learning what it means to become men of virtue, prayer and service. They have studied the life of Schoenstatt’s founder, Fr. Joseph Kentenich, as well as the lives of Schoenstatt heroes who lived their Covenant of Love with Mary faithfully, some even at the cost of their lives.

During this past school year, they focused more specifically on what they were promising Mary and what Mary was promising them. As I

watched them prepare, I found myself wishing that I had received this kind of formation when I was a young man. The boys learned, among many beautiful lessons, the Schoenstatt expression “Mother takes perfect care.” This describes Mary’s maternal care within the Covenant of Love, but it also speaks to her place in the life of every baptized Christian. The Covenant of Love is a personal renewal of our baptismal covenant in which we entrust ourselves to Mary and ask her to form us as faithful disciples of her Son.

In this covenant partnership, we discover that Mary is not a distant or passive mother. She knows us. She knows human life, with its joys, uncertainties and sorrows. Most importantly, she knows what it means to follow Christ completely. In our doubts she reassures us; in our discernment she guides us; in our loneliness she accompanies us; and in every circumstance she leads us toward Jesus.

“Mother takes perfect care” does not mean that Mary prevents every disappointment or removes every rock from our path. Her own life included uncertainty, exile, suffering and the cross. Rather, she remains with us through everything and helps us recognize and trust the loving providence of God.

St. Thérèse of Lisieux said during her “Last Conversations”: “We know very well that the Blessed Virgin is Queen of heaven and earth, but she is more Mother than Queen.”

My twins are beginning to discover that they now live their lives in the

heart of a mother. From the best mothers and grandmothers we have known, we understand that a good mother’s heart is tender, resilient, loving, creative, sacrificial and long suffering. How much more is this true of Mary’s heart?

## Trusting the Road Ahead

A new school year approaches with all its promises, possibilities and apprehensions. Yet we can take comfort knowing that others have traveled similar roads before us and that the Blessed Virgin Mary, our Queen and Mother, travels with us. She does not shield us from every difficulty but accompanies us through them and continually leads us to her Son.

Whenever we encounter something that calls for help, we can turn confidently to Mary. Her mother’s care is never separate from God’s providence because her heart is completely united to his will. She helps us recognize the way God opens before us and trust the time he chooses. Therefore, if we ever bump up against something that seems like we could use a little motherly help, we can pray to God with Mary this beautiful prayer:

*You know the way for me,*

*You know the time.*

*Into your hands*

*I trustingly place mine.*

*Your plan is perfect,*

*Born of perfect love.*

*You know the way for me,*

*That is enough. Amen.*

## Catechetical Conference Calls Ministers 'Back to the Well'

Catechists and parish ministry leaders gathered Aug. 20-22 at the Mary Mother of the Church Pastoral Center for formation, prayer and reflection.

The 2026 Catechetical Conference, themed "Back to the Well: Rediscovering Our Call to Serve," drew inspiration from the Gospel account of the Samaritan woman's encounter with Christ.

Timothy P. O'Malley, Ph.D., of the McGrath Institute for Church Life at the University of Notre Dame, opened the conference by challenging participants to consider the increasingly fast pace of modern life and its effects on families.

Technology has made greater speed and efficiency possible, he said, but work, activities and digital demands can leave families little room simply to be present to one another.

"We're not made for 5G," O'Malley said. "We actually aren't made to move that fast."

Rather than adding more obligations to crowded family schedules, O'Malley said parishes can create spaces for prayer, contemplation, community and genuine leisure.

The conference also included Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, confession and workshops on family catechesis, sacramental preparation, ministry to young people and other topics.

Archbishop Jeffrey S. Grob encouraged participants to use the conference to be renewed in Christ before returning to their ministries.

"Take time to receive anew the love of Christ, to be refreshed by his presence, and to allow him to renew your heart for the mission he has entrusted to you," he wrote.

◀ *Brenda Cline, executive director of the Department of Parish and Diocesan Life, speaks with keynote presenter Timothy P. O'Malley, Ph.D., during the 2026 Catechetical Conference at the Mary Mother of the Church Pastoral Center in St. Francis. (Photo by Kelsey DeMarais)*





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Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary

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Open House Activities

**SEPT. 12 | 2:00 pm**  
Jubilee Day



ENGLISH

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● **FRIDAY, SEPT. 4**

**First Friday Pilgrimage — Journey in the Footsteps of St. Francis:** 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., Basilica of St. Josaphat and St. Francis of Assisi Church, Milwaukee. The pilgrimage includes presentations by Conventual and Capuchin Franciscan friars, a Basilica tour, Mass, prayer, fellowship and lunch. Cost is \$25, including lunch. Also offered Oct. 2 and Nov. 6. Register by the Tuesday before each pilgrimage at thebasilica.org/pilgrimage.

● **SATURDAY, SEPT. 5**

**First Saturdays of Reflection:** 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Basilica and National Shrine of Mary Help of Christians at Holy Hill, 1525 Carmel Road, Hubertus. Join the Discalced Carmelites of Holy Hill for these days of recollection on the first Saturday of the month. This month's theme is "Walking Daily in God's Presence." Registration is \$20 and includes lunch. For more information, visit [holyhill.com/events/first-saturday-days-of-recollection-at-holy-hill](http://holyhill.com/events/first-saturday-days-of-recollection-at-holy-hill).

**Traveling Rosary for Life:** 8 a.m., Our Lady of the Holyland, 308 S. County Road W, Mount Calvary. Join the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and the Respect Life Office for this monthly program praying the Rosary for life. Each first Saturday, different parishes will host a prayer service, which may include Mass and/or adoration but will always include the Rosary.

● **MONDAY, SEPT. 7**

**Sursum Corda Old Fashioned Theology:** 5:30 p.m., St. Stanislaus, 524 W. Historic Mitchell St., Milwaukee. Mass, followed by formation, drinks in the rectory and a social for young adults. For more information, visit [institute.flocknote.com/SCMilwaukee](http://institute.flocknote.com/SCMilwaukee).

**110th Annual Slovak Pilgrimage:** 10 a.m., Holy Hill, 1525 Carmel Road, Hubertus. The pilgrimage begins with Stations of the Cross at the bottom of the hill, followed by Mass at 11 a.m. in the main church.

● **TUESDAY, SEPT. 8**

**Jubilee Festival Open House:** 4-8 p.m., Schoenstatt Retreat Center, W284N698 Cherry Lane, Waukesha. The Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary are celebrating their centenary with a week of fun and faith-filled events. Tour the retreat center and lands, participate in a scavenger hunt, visit the shrine for adoration, enjoy a hayrack ride and more. Open houses held daily through Friday, Sept. 11. For more information, visit [timeoff2026.my.canva.site/jubilee-festival](http://timeoff2026.my.canva.site/jubilee-festival).

● **WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 9**

**Archbishop's Annual Pallium Lecture:** 7 p.m., Brookfield Conference Center, 325 S. Moorland Rd, Brookfield. This year's lecture will be presented by Stephen P. White and is titled "Be Not Afraid: The Future of the American Catholic Presbyterate." White is the executive director of the St. John Paul II National Shrine in Washington, D.C. This event is free and open to the public, but registration is required at [archmil.regfox.com/pallium-lecture-2026](http://archmil.regfox.com/pallium-lecture-2026).

**Cor Jesu:** 7-9 p.m., St. Robert, 2200 E. Capitol Drive, Shorewood. Prayer with music, silence, Reconciliation and 8 p.m. Mass. Repeats weekly on Wednesdays.

● **FRIDAY, SEPT. 11**

**Fish Fry:** 4-7 p.m., St. Barnabas (St. Augustine Cym), 2025 S. 67th Place, West Allis. For more information, visit [stbarnabascc.org](http://stbarnabascc.org).

**St. Luke Fall Festival:** 4-11 p.m., St. Luke, 18000 W. Greenfield Ave., Brookfield. Festival features a fish fry, shrimp dinner, live music, children's activities, bake sale, cash raffle, flashlight candy hunt and a marketplace of local craft and home-based vendors from 4-8 p.m. CASH ONLY.

**St. Gabriel Fish Fry:** 4:30-7:30 p.m., St. Gabriel Parish, 1200 St. Gabriel Way, Hubertus. Fish and chicken finger dinners with a choice of potato pancakes or french fries, coleslaw, rye bread, applesauce, drink and cookie. Fish dinners are \$15 and chicken finger dinners are \$10. Beer and soda will be available for purchase.

● **SATURDAY, SEPT. 12**

**14th Annual Men of Christ Holy Hill Event:** 10 a.m., Basilica and National Shrine of Mary Help of Christians at Holy Hill, 1525 Carmel Road, Hubertus. Presented by Men and Women of Christ, this daylong event begins with adoration and Benediction, continues with Mass presided over by Bishop Donald Hying at 11 a.m., followed by a Eucharistic procession at noon, lunch and a kiddie run at 2 p.m. Proceeds will support the Friends of the Bridegroom. For more information, visit [menofchrist.net](http://menofchrist.net).

**Jubilee Day Mass:** Schoenstatt Retreat Center, W284N698 Cherry Lane, Waukesha. The Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary conclude their centenary celebrations with a day of festivities beginning with Mass celebrated by Bishop Donald Hying at 2 p.m. For more information, visit [timeoff2026.my.canva.site/jubilee-festival](http://timeoff2026.my.canva.site/jubilee-festival).

**Doing Time Together:** 9:30-10:45 a.m., Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, 831 N. Van Buren St., Milwaukee. Free, confidential interfaith

support group for those whose loved ones are currently incarcerated or returning back to the community. All are welcome. For more information, contact Dcn. Tom Hunt at 414-961-0332.

**St. Gabriel Giant Flea Market:** 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., St. Gabriel Parish, 1200 St. Gabriel Way, Hubertus. More than 300 vendors featuring rummage items, antiques, collectibles, handmade goods and more. Food, drinks, raffles and homemade baked goods will be available. Event is held rain or shine. Parking is \$2.

● **SUNDAY, SEPT. 13**

**Sensory Friendly Mass:** 9:30 a.m., Immaculate Conception/St. Mary Parish, 415 Roosevelt Dr., West Bend. This Mass is adapted for those with developmental disabilities, sensory processing issues, Alzheimer's or dementia, with dimmed lights, softer music, no incense and shorter homilies. An open house of the Journey Programs classroom and Sensory Friendly Room will follow. The Journey Program provides adaptive Catholic formation for those with cognitive and behavioral needs.

**Holy Hour for Vocations:** 2 p.m., St. John the Evangelist, 8500 W. Coldspring Road, Greenfield. Sponsored by Roses for Our Lady. More information at [rosesforourlady.org](http://rosesforourlady.org).

● **WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 16**

**Walking With Purpose Bible Study:** 10-11:30 a.m., St. Francis de Sales, Lake Geneva. Women are invited to a 22-week Bible study, "Opening Your Heart," one of the foundational studies of the Walking With Purpose program. The group meets Wednesdays beginning Sept. 16 in the parish center. For more information or to register, call or text Theresa Bachhuber at 860-985-6168.

● **THURSDAY, SEPT. 17**

**Rummage and Bake Sale:** 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., St. Barnabas, 7109 W. Orchard St., West Allis. Shop this huge indoor rummage sale today, plus Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. or Saturday (half-price and \$10 bag day) from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Stillman Lecture Series:** 6:30 p.m., Basilica of St. Josaphat, 2333 S. 6th St., Milwaukee. Rev. Dr. Daniel Galadza will present "The Theology of the Byzantine Tradition as Experienced in Liturgical Worship," exploring the theological, liturgical, spiritual and ascetical traditions of Byzantine Rite Catholics. Optional Vespers in the Byzantine tradition begins at 5:45 p.m. A reception with wine and refreshments and a question-and-answer session with Galadza will follow the lecture.

**Catholic Professionals Forum:** 7:15-9 a.m., Westmoor Country Club, 400 S. Moorland Road, Brookfield. Join other Catholic professionals for networking and a presentation from an inspiring speaker. \$40 if prepaid, \$45 for walk-ins. Featured speaker is Christa Beall Diefenbach, CEO, Milwaukee Domes Alliance. Visit [catholicprofessionalsforum.com](http://catholicprofessionalsforum.com).

● **FRIDAY, SEPT. 18**

**Fish Fry:** 4:30-7 p.m., St. Bernadette, 8200 W. Denver Ave., Milwaukee. Takeout available. For more information, call 414-358-4600 or visit [stbweb.com](http://stbweb.com).

● **SUNDAY, SEPT. 20**

**Break Your Fast with Sursum Corda Young Adults:** Following 10 a.m. Mass, St. Stanislaus, 524 W. Historic Mitchell St., Milwaukee. Enjoy coffee, doughnuts and hot ham with other young adults in the parish hall. For more information, visit [institute.flocknote.com/SCMilwaukee](http://institute.flocknote.com/SCMilwaukee).

**Walking with St. Francis in an AI Age:** 1 p.m., Basilica of St. Josaphat, 6th Street and Lincoln Avenue, Milwaukee. Sr. Damien Marie Savino, FSE, will explore Pope Leo XIV's encyclical, "Magnifica Humanitas," through the lens of Franciscan spirituality, reflecting on how the teachings of St. Francis can help preserve human dignity in an increasingly technology-driven culture.

**REGISTRATION NOW OPEN —**

**Third Annual All Fore the Glory Golf Outing:** 11 a.m., Monday, Sept. 28, The Bog Golf Course, 3121 County Road I, Saukville. Join the community of St. John XXIII for a day of games and golf, followed by dinner. Register by Aug. 31 for a 10% discount. For more information, visit [stjohn23rd.org/golf-outing/](http://stjohn23rd.org/golf-outing/).

**Jubilee Celebration for Couples:** 10 a.m., Sunday, Oct. 3, Lumen Christi, 2750 W. Mequon Road, Mequon. Married couples celebrating their 25th or 50th anniversary, or any anniversary over 50 years, are invited to attend a special Mass presided over by Archbishop Grob. Photo opportunity and celebration to follow. Register by Sept. 14 at [archmil.regfox.com/jubilee-anniversary-mass-2026](http://archmil.regfox.com/jubilee-anniversary-mass-2026).

**Annual White Mass and Presentation:** 9 a.m., Saturday, Oct. 17, St. Dominic Parish, 18255 W. Capitol Dr., Brookfield. Join the Milwaukee Guild of the Catholic Medical Association for its annual White Mass celebrating Catholic healthcare workers, followed by a presentation from Joseph M. Vukov, Ph.D., titled, "Staying Human in an Era of Artificial Intelligence." For more information and to register, visit [mgcma.org](http://mgcma.org).

COLLEEN JURKIEWICZ  
SPECIAL TO THE CATHOLIC HERALD

**What have been the most joyful moments of your first three years of priesthood?**

One was my Mass of Thanksgiving, where my godson received his First Communion. It just happened to work in God's time that he was 8 years old and in second grade the year I was ordained, and he was able to receive First Communion from his godfather.

**He's a lucky kid! What's the second?**

The second would be weddings. I've had 32 weddings in three years, and I've absolutely loved them. I have a tradition with my wedding couples that I buy them dinner. My first couple took me up on the offer about two weeks before the wedding, and I began by saying "Remember, this is on me, drinks included," and the bride, who wasn't Catholic, was relieved to see that priests drink. We had a great conversation, and they started going to Mass every week after their wedding. I think they saw that, yes, he's a priest, he's here in a collar, but he's also just talking and hearing stories. He's with us and he can be fun to be around. He's not weird — well, I am, but ...

**But in a good way.**

In a great way! The third thing is that last year, I got to run the OCIA program in the Northwest cluster of parishes of Racine. I had every aspect of it — people who were baptized, people who had prior marriages that needed figuring out before we could get them received into the Church, baptized Catholics who had never been confirmed. I just absolutely loved it. Then, on an amazingly beautiful Easter Vigil night, we received six into the Church, and I got to do a full immersion baptism. I climbed in the tank to fully dunk him. It was great.

## MY FAITH MINI-PROFILE

### Fr. Joseph Heit Archdiocese of Milwaukee Office of Worship

As the new director of the Office of Worship, Fr. Joseph Heit hopes to create opportunities for liturgical dialogue, education and growth throughout the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Just don't ask him to sing: "I don't have a musical bone in my body," he said. "I can chant, but only if no one has to repeat a note after me."

- Before entering the seminary, Fr. Heit worked in parish ministry in the Diocese of Madison for 13 years. He also has a master's degree from the Liturgical Institute at Mundelein Seminary.
- He was ordained in 2023 and was appointed to be the director of the Archdiocesan Office of Worship earlier this year.
- He enjoys being with his family, which includes an ever-growing brood of nieces and nephews.



▲ Fr. Joseph Heit performs a full-immersion Baptism during the Easter Vigil this year at the Northwest cluster of parishes in Racine. Fr. Heit, the new director of the Archdiocesan Office of Worship, called the experience one of the highlights of his first three years as a priest. (Submitted photo)

**What do you envision for your new role in the Office of Worship?**

There are a lot of questions around the liturgy, especially this summer, and it makes me think of what we used to talk about in the seminary — how do we find the green zone based on what the Church asks for? Where does the archbishop prefer us to fall liturgically? There's a whole spectrum in our parishes, and my job isn't to police that but to help develop it. One thing I really like is that I'm going to be out there teaching in parishes. Pastors can invite me in, whether it's to preach or to give a mission, and we can talk about the spirituality and the theology behind the sacraments and the liturgy. That's my goal — go pray with the community, get to know these different liturgical pockets. Then, if a parish is thinking about a renovation or has any kind of issue, they can call me and get an outsider's view, but as someone who's prayed with them.

**Who do you go to when you need advice?**

Any of my brother priests, because we're all unique. We all have a different perspective, and we've all dealt with different things. I won't always agree with them, but at least I can hear them out. There are also many lay staff members I used to work with who I can call and say, "Hey, have you ever experienced this? What are your thoughts?"

**What is your favorite hymn?**

It's a common one among priests: "O God Beyond All Praising." Mostly because I don't have that musical gift, I like the songs that allow the people to drown me out. Because I'm going to sing — God gave me this voice and I'm going to give it back to him.