



Deacon News

Diocese of Davenport

Fall 2020

From the Diaconate Office:

Hello Diaconate Community, and Candidates,

Ministry during this COVID pandemic is not normal. Almost all ways of ministry have been effected; even the simple conversation has to be at a distance, and behind masks to minimize the risk of spreading the virus. Hopefully you are finding new and unique ways to minister and serve others.

The end of the year is coming soon, and the season of Advent will be starting. Advent is traditionally a time for clergy to bless houses, and may be an opportunity for ministry and evangelization.

Evangelization is one of the ministries that has been effected. Bishop Zinkula has asked all the deacons of the Davenport Diocese to step up and take a lead role in evangelizing to others. See page 2 and 3 for details.

It has also been hard for deacons to gather socially and talk about common issues and listen to one another. The fall convocation was cancelled, the priest ordination was not open to the public or to clergy, and we couldn't even attend the Chrism Mass. I don't know about you, but I miss seeing all my deacon friends! In order to connect virtually, we will start having a monthly virtual meeting for deacons. We will have a topic to present or discuss at each meeting, but we also want to provide time to talk about whatever is important to you. See page 4 for more information.

Deacon Class 8 has begun their 4th year of formation and ordination for this class is less than 2 years away. Continue to pray for the candidates, and their wives and families. That also means that Deacon Formation Class 9 will be starting in

Heavenly Father, since the time of the Apostles you have inspired the Church to commission certain members to assist in a special way in the pastoral mission of Christ. Bless the deacons and all other ordained and non-ordained ministers that they may be humble and faith-inspired in their service. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen

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less than 2 years. We all need to be looking for good candidates to fill this next class, and help them recognize God's call.

God Bless,

Deacon Michael Snyder, Director of the Diaconate



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- The Deacon's Call (monthly virtual meetings) - watch for dates and times
- Fall Clergy Workshop (via Zoom) - Thursday, November 12, 2020 - details to be announced
- Spring Deacon Retreat April 24-25, 2021 *For Deacons and Wives*

The COVID-19 Pandemic has certainly challenged our ability to evangelize to people. Most of our interactions have been curtailed by the distance requirements to keep us all more safe and not transmit the disease. Bishop Zinkula is encouraging the faithful of the Diocese of Davenport to form small groups in order to evangelize. Eventually, this would include inviting people without a strong faith to join in the small groups, so that the faithful can share their faith with them. But people may not yet be comfortable sharing their faith, especially with people they don't know well. If that is the case, then we must practice!

DEACONS are INVITED to form a small faith-sharing group, with friends, family, parish members, or neighbors. If you are not comfortable sharing with others yet, perhaps you would be more comfortable forming a group of deacons to practice sharing and become familiar with the materials. You are a spiritual leader within your parish and in the Diocese; please take this opportunity to lead!

The text boxes below have more information, and the next page has even more information. To go directly to the source, go to www.davenportdiocese.org/emmaus, and register for one of the information meetings to be held in October.

Bishop Zinkula requests that all deacons, as his Clergy and as Spiritual Leaders in the Diocese, form a small faith-sharing group.

The Vision 20/20 Steering Committee has provided an easy way to share our faith. The letter on the next page describes it in more detail, but basically, a guidebook and materials are provided to help guide us through these faith-sharing conversations.

To get even more information about Emmaus faith sharing small groups, visit the Diocese' website at www.davenportdiocese.org/emmaus.

There will be three virtual information meetings in October to describe the program. If you intend to attend one of the meetings, please RSVP to Ryan at ryan@theburchetts.com.

Topic:
Emmaus Groups Informational Zoom Meetings
Times:
Oct 13, 2020 01:00 PM Central Time
Oct 14, 2020 07:00 PM Central Time
Oct 15, 2020 09:00 AM Central Time

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6263196721>
Meeting ID: 626 319 6721

Please rsvp to: ryan@theburchetts.com



Dear Pastors and Parish Leadership,

For the past several months, we've all no doubt struggled to discover how we can grow in faith and strengthen our community in this time of distance. With that in mind, Bishop Zinkula and Vision 20/20 invite you and your parish to journey with Christ through the Emmaus Initiative. The Emmaus Initiative is an effort by Vision 20/20 to connect the faithful in a meaningful way by forming small groups.

Perhaps you already have a small group program in your parish. If so, we ask you to make a concerted effort to attract wider participation to that effort. If you don't have anything in place, we have a program ready for you to implement.

The "Discipleship Quad" program from Franciscan University at Steubenville is designed for people to walk closely together as a small group and thereby learn more about themselves, their faith, and their friends. Materials, which allow parishioners to form their own groups, are being made available to our parishes and schools. The materials are free and available in both English and Spanish.

The Discipleship Quad program is designed for groups of four who meet weekly for one year to grow and learn together. While this is the ideal way to use the materials, we understand that some people may not be able to make such a commitment. In that case, groups can be flexible in terms of the number of members and the frequency and duration of sessions. The true content is the relationships that develop rather than the details of the program. We are most focused on getting the faithful to make meaningful personal connections with Christ and each other.

In this time of pandemic, it may not be possible for groups to meet in person. Included in the materials are instructions on how to initiate electronic meetings using several different platforms.

We ask that you make an effort to get the word out now and throughout the upcoming year. Groups can form and begin this process at any time. Marketing materials are available on the Emmaus website. They include video clips, social media images, bulletin text, Mass announcements and more. One great thing about this program is that once parishioners know about it, they can take the reigns and run with it on their own. It doesn't require coordination from the parish in that regard. We would love it if pastors and their parish leadership would participate in their own groups too!

Please visit www.davenportdiocese.org/emmaus to review the program and find the marketing materials you can use to get the word out to your parish. A document is attached that will answer many of your questions. May God bless us as we take this journey together!

In Christ,

Vision 20/20 Steering Committee

The Deacon's Call

It is difficult to stay connected with fellow deacons during the pandemic and distance restrictions. The spring retreat was cancelled, the Fall Convocation was cancelled, we were not able to gather as a group for the Chrism and Ordination Masses.

Last month, the Deacon Council Officers met virtually in our regular quarterly Executive Meeting. It was nice to see and visit with others who share the same restrictions and difficulties of ministry, and hear of opportunities and ideas that other deacons had. As a group, we decided to start a series of monthly virtual meetings so that all deacons of the diocese have the opportunity to talk, share, and offer encouragement to each other. This monthly meeting will be called: *The Deacon's Call*. In addition to a planned topic for discussion, it will be a time to share and talk about whatever is on your mind.

A list of potential topics has been created, and we will present one topic each month for conversation. A few of these topics are:

- How are you dealing with the COVID restrictions?
- Small faith sharing groups; how can deacons lead?
- Blessing homes during Advent
- How to evangelize during COVID; how do we get people involved?
- How do we talk about political issues without violating the Canon that prohibits clergy from endorsing candidates or parties?
- Retreat opportunities
How can we improve liturgy now during restrictions, and after restrictions are lifted? What does good liturgy look like now?

If you have not replied to my email note to tell me of your time and day preference, please call or send a note to let me know.

Best time of day for you to participate: _____:00 AM or PM?

Best day of the week: _____ What weeks of the month is this day open? _____

2nd best day of the week: _____ What weeks of the month is this day open? _____

Advent House Blessing

Advent season is traditionally a time for blessing houses. Many of you have done this in the past; it may be a good way to reconnect with people in your parish, especially if they are not comfortable being in public and coming to Mass.

Discuss with your Pastor; does your parish want to offer and do house blessings this year? What is the best way to make the offer, or advertise in your parish? What steps should be taken to keep from potentially spreading the virus? Mask, distance, sanitize or wash hands.

Deacon Class 9

The start of the next Deacon Formation Class is August 2022, which is fast approaching. The ordination for Class 9 would be in 2027. Take a moment to figure out the age of the deacons in your parish in 7 years when that next class would be ordained. Most of your eyes are open now, just like mine!

We need to ensure that the diaconate remains healthy and well in the Diocese of Davenport. We are retiring more deacons than we ordain, and the quantity of deacons is getting less. Quantity is not the primary attribute that tells us about the health of the diaconate; quantity is more about how much work there is to be done. But I will submit that there is an increasing amount of work to be done in these most challenging times. The Church, and the faithful, and especially non-believers need deacons now even more than ever. As long as there are people in nursing homes and hospitals, at home without easy transportation, or in prisons, more deacons are needed to visit. As long as there are people who do not understand Church teaching, the Bible and their faith, more deacons are needed to catechize. As long as people are hungry, homeless, or without proper clothing, more deacons are needed to serve.

We need to fill Deacon Formation Class 9 *full* with men whom God is calling to the diaconate. It is up to us to educate men in the diocese so they can recognize and hear God calling.

How can you help? By identifying men who have the attributes of a good deacon. Talk with them, let them know you think they would make a good deacon. This is how many of us first learned about our call to the diaconate; through the Holy Spirit talking through others. But just because you think they would be a good deacon doesn't mean God is calling them. Therefore, you need to identify and talk with several in your parish so you don't miss the one or two that God is calling.

Talk with your Pastor to coordinate and share notes. A diocese effort to provide more awareness of the diaconate is being planned. Materials, videos and podcasts will be provided. But you can start by identifying and visiting with these men now.

Prayer and Help Requests

Please let us know if you have any needs; either for prayer or otherwise.

Call Mike Snyder at 563-726-5426, or send email to: snyder@davenportdiocese.org

Save the Date!

Spring Deacon Retreat **April 24-25, 2021**

For Deacons and Wives

Held at the Benet Retreat House, Rock Island, IL