

The Herald

A Newsletter of Diaconal Ministries



Deacon Dominic Cerrato, Ph.D.



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Editor's Corner

At the heart of the Gospel lies the mystery of self-gift. Our Lord reveals that “whoever would be great among you must be your servant” (Mk 10:43). This is not merely a moral exhortation, but a revelation of divine love itself, a love poured out for the life of the world. The diaconate stands as a particular sign of this mystery, calling the ordained to embody Christ the Servant in their very being.

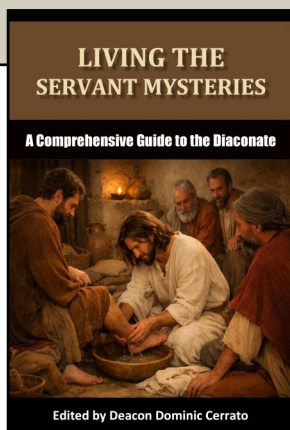
Yet this call is not reserved to the deacon alone. By virtue of Baptism, every Christian is invited into this same pattern of self-giving love. The deacon’s ministry, therefore, becomes both a witness and an invitation, reminding the faithful that true fulfillment is found not in self-assertion, but in self-donation.

In a culture often marked by individualism, this witness is both countercultural and deeply needed. It points us back to the truth that we find ourselves precisely in giving ourselves away (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 24).

In Jesus and Mary,
Deacon Dom

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Coming Soon



The First Comprehensive Textbook on the Diaconate

June 2026 *Living the Servant Mysteries* is a comprehensive eighteen-chapter textbook, written in collaboration with twelve contributing authors, that presents a deeply integrated vision of the diaconate, moving beyond pastoral technique to the very heart of the vocation itself.

[Learn More](#)

Short Reflections

Meditations on Christ the Servant

These reflections, drawn from Deacon Dominic’s prayer and pastoral experience, offer concise yet penetrating meditations on Christ the Servant and the vocation to serve in His name. Rooted in Scripture and the lived reality of diaconal ministry, they invite a deeper interior life, leading the reader to let communion with the Lord overflow into concrete acts of charity.

[Read the Reflections](#)

Video Podcasts

Latest Posting: Mary, The Heart of the Diaconate

This reflection presents Mary as the model of the diaconate. Her “yes” at the Annunciation reveals that true diakonia is a total gift of self to God. From this interior surrender, authentic ministry flows. Mary thus teaches the deacon to listen, trust, and live a faithful “yes” each day. In this way, his service becomes a living participation in Christ the Servant.

[View Podcast](#)



Dom's Blog

From Function to Communion:

Why Priests and Deacons Must Be Brothers Before Co-Workers



In this latest reflection, I explore a subtle but significant challenge in ordained ministry: the tendency to reduce the relationship between priests and deacons to roles and responsibilities rather than recognizing it as a sacramental communion rooted in Christ.

Drawing from the Church's teaching that Holy Orders is one sacrament in three distinct grades (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1536), the article reflects on how this shared identity calls priests and deacons to something deeper than collaboration. They are not simply co-workers in the vineyard, but brothers configured to the same Christ, called to reveal His love through a unity that is both interior and lived.

The post highlights the spiritual principle that authentic unity cannot be achieved through structure alone. It must arise from a deepening communion with Christ, one that transforms relationships from within. When this interior life is neglected, ministry can become functional and fragmented. When it is embraced, a genuine fraternity emerges, marked by humility, mutual reverence, and a shared commitment to the Church's mission.

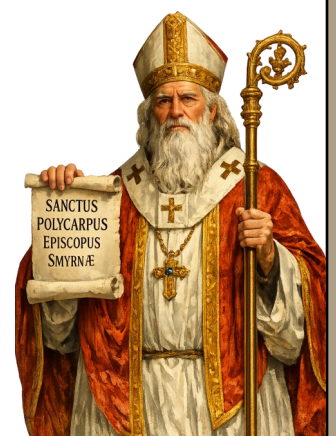
You are invited to read the full post and reflect more deeply on how this call to communion might shape your own relationships in ministry and in the life of the Church. I also welcome your thoughts and experiences, as together we continue the conversation on fostering authentic unity in Christ.

[Visit the Blog](#)

“Deacons must be blameless before His righteousness, as servants of God and Christ and not of men; not slanderers, not double-tongued, not lovers of money, but temperate in all things, compassionate, diligent, walking according to the truth of the Lord, who became the servant of all.”

(Letter to the Philippians, 5.2)

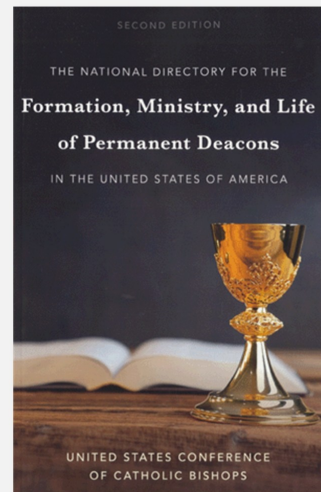
Polycarp situates the deacon firmly within the imitation of Christ the Servant, emphasizing moral integrity as the visible expression of an interior conformity to the Lord.



Diocesan Diaconate Directors

Is Your Program Fully Aligned with the National Directory?

The diaconate is not shaped by preference or circumstance, but by the mind of the Church. The National Directory establishes the normative vision for the diaconate, guiding its formation, and mission so that deacons are better prepared to serve the Church.



To Accomplish This,

Diaconal Ministries' AI-Enhanced Evaluation Tool offers a comprehensive, objective assessment of your diocesan diaconate in light of these norms. With clarity and precision for your diocese, you will receive:

- A structured evaluation of your formation and ministry.
- A complete gap analysis.
- A concrete actionable strategic plan
- Confidence that your diaconate reflects the Church's vision

See for yourself what Diaconal Ministries has to offer, visit our website to download full samples of the gap analysis and strategic plan and begin your evaluation today.

[Learn More](#)

Be a Part of Our Ministry

Help Support Us

Your support of Diaconal Ministries makes it possible to strengthen deacons in their identity as servants of Christ and to provide the spiritual, theological, and pastoral resources they need to serve the Church with confidence and charity. By partnering in this mission, you help deepen the interior life of the deacon, renew his ministry, and extend Christ's love to those he is called to serve.



[Learn More](#)



The Dalmatic

The liturgical vestment proper to the deacon, the dalmatic, finds its origin in the ancient world as a garment associated with dignity and even imperial service within the Roman order. Over time, the Church, in her wisdom, received and transfigured this cultural symbol, incorporating it into her sacred liturgy. In doing so, she enacted a quiet but profound theological reversal: what once signified rank and worldly authority was reoriented toward the mystery of Christ, who "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant" (Phil 2:7).

Thus, the dalmatic becomes more than a vestment, it is a visible sign of the deacon's sacramental identity.

Upcoming Events

EveryDayDeacon and  **DIACONAL MINISTRIES**
Deacons. Become What You Are. present

An Online Conference for Catholic Deacons

A Love That Stoops

Encountering Christ the Servant
in the Diaconate

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JUNE 12-13, 2026



Pope Leo: The Dalmatic & Service



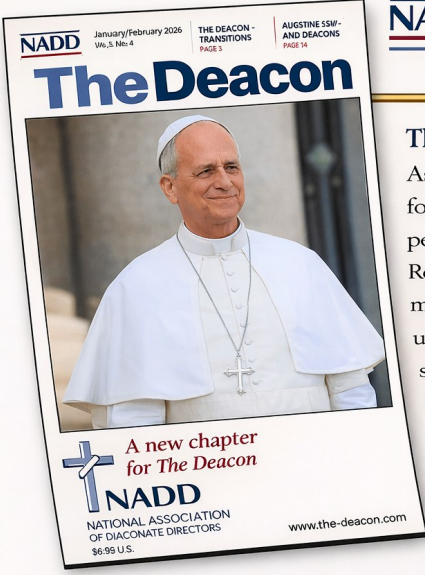
Holy Thursday, 2026

On Holy Thursday, when the Church contemplates Christ bending low to wash the feet of His disciples, the image of Pope Leo XIV vested in the dalmatic becomes a living catechesis on the unity of Holy Orders. The dalmatic, proper to the deacon, is not merely a garment but a sign of service rooted in charity. When worn by the Roman Pontiff, it reveals that the diaconal dimension is not an isolated grade, but the very foundation upon which the entire sacrament rests.

Thus, when the Pope wears the dalmatic, he embodies his ancient title, *Servus servorum Dei*—Servant of the servants of God. In him, the unity of Holy Orders is made visible: authority flowing from charity, governance rooted in humility, and leadership expressed through self-gift. The Church is reminded that every ministry, at its heart, must kneel before it can stand.

Diaconal Resources

The resources highlighted below are not paid advertisements. They reflect organizations, publications, and initiatives with which Deacon Dom has been personally associated or has found beneficial in his ministry. Their inclusion is offered solely



NADD The Deacon
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DIACONATE DIRECTORS

The Deacon magazine, published by the National Association of Diaconate Directors, serves as a vital resource for the spiritual, theological, and pastoral formation of permanent deacons and those in formation for the diaconate. Rooted in the Church's teaching on Holy Orders and the ministry of service, it offers articles that deepen the deacon's understanding of his identity as an icon of Christ the Servant, strengthen his communion with the bishop and presbyterate, and support his mission of charity in the world.

Through reflections, pastoral guidance, and practical resources, *The Deacon* fosters an integrated vision of diaconal life that unites prayer, liturgy, and service, helping deacons live their vocation with clarity, fidelity, and zeal.

[Learn More](#)



Your Partner in Deacon Formation

The Josephinum Diaconate Institute is a trusted partner in forming men for the diaconate. Our flexible and cost-effective online format allows students to study from anywhere, with accredited courses taught by deacons and academic faculty.

Courses are available in English or Spanish, allowing mixed-language cohorts to learn in their preferred language.

We also offer short-format programming for continuing formation in Josephinum Connect! These courses are designed to support the lifelong process of formation for ministry.



Learn more today at diaconate.pcj.edu

FORMING MEN OF THE CHURCH FOR THE SACRED ORDER OF SERVICE

CENTER FOR DIACONAL STUDIES

At the heart of *the Church's life* stands the deacon, configured *sacramentally* to Christ the Servant and called to pour himself out in humble charity for the People of God. *The Franciscan Center for Diaconal Studies* forms men for this sacred ministry through a deeply integrated vision of *intellectual, spiritual, pastoral, and human formation*, drawing each deacon into an ever-deepening *communion* with the Lord whose love he proclaims in word and service. Rooted in *Scripture, Tradition, and the living Magisterium*, and offering courses for *both diaconal formation and ongoing formation*, this formation equips deacons to serve their bishops, strengthen their parishes, and become living signs of *Christ's self-gift poured out for the life of the world*.



FRANCISCAN UNIVERSITY
— of STEUBENVILLE —

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DIACONAL MINISTRIES

Growing in Greater Intimacy
with Christ the Servant



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