

Vocation Ministry Launches First “Deacon Sunday” to Raise Awareness and Affirmation to the Permanent Diaconate

Parishes Nationwide Are Invited To Celebrate Deacons And Their Families On Sunday, October 9

Houston, TX, September 19, 2022— Vocation Ministry, an organization dedicated to supporting and increasing vocations, has initiated the first annual “Deacon Sunday” to be held nationwide on Sunday, October 9 in an effort to affirm deacons and their families. The event, which will be held yearly on the second Sunday of October, is bolstered by a number of creative resources and ideas developed by Vocation Ministry to be easily implemented into the life of parishes and schools.

“When you look up deacon appreciation, there is nothing on the Catholic Vocation Calendar. All that comes up in a basic search on Google is greeting cards. We recognized a need in the Church to affirm our deacons and teach younger generations about the diaconate, so we felt compelled to start something ourselves,” Rhonda Gruenewald, founder of Vocation Ministry, said.

Deacons serve a vital role in the life of a parish. Depending on the parish, deacons proclaim the Gospel, deliver homilies, perform baptisms, visit the sick, distribute the Eucharist, teach the faith, and generally assist the pastor. They are prepared to take on these responsibilities during a five-year formation period before being ordained. The wife of each deacon is also formed in support of her husband’s call to serve the church.

The number of men serving as permanent deacons, however, is dwindling. In 2021, 458 new permanent deacons were ordained. At the same time, 512 deacons retired from active ministry, and another 393 deacons died.

“We feel an urgent need to increase awareness and gratitude for these men who have said yes to this particular call,” Gruenewald said. “The need to emphasize vocations of all types is real. Only 10-20% of all parishes in the United States do anything to promote and nurture vocations. And yet they are essential to the life of the Church. The goal of Vocation Ministry is to equip the Church once again to awaken the call of a vocation within the human heart.”

Among the offerings provided by Vocation Ministry to honor deacons are images, Mass announcements, thank you cards specific to deacons, and St. Laurence prayer cards with a special prayer for deacons written by Most Reverend Douglas Lucia, Bishop of Syracuse, NY, who serves on the Episcopacy Board for Vocation Ministry. All of these resources are available at <https://vocationministry.com/deacon-sunday/>.

For more information about Vocation Ministry and a complete press kit, visit <https://vocationministry.com/deaconsundaypresskit/>.

Rhonda Gruenewald is available for comment. To request an interview, contact Carrie Kline at carriek@revolutionizingmissions.com.

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