

**The Diaconate in the Archdiocese of New Orleans:**

**The Prominence of the Social Apostolate**

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## Table of Contents

### Introduction

Introduction .....	3
Where did the Permanent Diaconate Come from .....	3
The beginnings in the Archdiocese of New Orleans .....	9
The Formation Periods in the Archdiocese of New Orleans.....	20
Relations Between Presbyters and Deacons in this Archdiocese.....	24
Duties of Deacons in this Archdiocese.....	24
Where is the Permanent Diaconate Today in this Archdiocese.....	27
Conclusion.....	27
Appendix A .....	30
Appendix B.....	35
Bibliography .....	36

## **Introduction**

In this paper I will focus on the social ministry of the diaconate beginning with a discussion of the Twelve Apostles and then shifting to the ideas of those promulgated by the Second Vatican Council. Then I will describe the beginnings of the permanent diaconate in this local archdiocese (New Orleans), and how the ministry of deacon is currently carried out in the Archdiocese of New Orleans. I will look at the beginnings here, in this archdiocese, as instituted by Archbishop Philip Hannan, who was at the Second Vatican Council, and the early formation periods, their length and the subjects covered, the subsequent formation periods and the subjects covered, the relationship of the deacon and presbyter in this archdiocese, some of the duties of deacons in this archdiocese and where the permanent diaconate stands today in New Orleans.

### **Where Did the Permanent Diaconate Come from?**

To answer the question, “Where Did the Permanent Diaconate Come from?” requires that our journey begin with Sacred Scripture, the Book of Acts specifically. “At that time, as the number of disciples continued to grow, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. So the Twelve called together the community of the disciples and said, ‘It is not right for us to neglect the word of God to serve at table. Brothers, select from among you seven reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint to this task, whereas we shall devote ourselves to the ministry of the word.’ The proposal was

acceptable to the whole community...They presented these men to the apostles who prayed and laid hands on them” (Acts 6:1-6).<sup>1</sup>

What is interesting, or perhaps paradoxical, is that after the laying on of hands by the Apostles, the seven men ordained as “deacons” are never referred to as doing any kind of waiting on tables or serving the widows<sup>2</sup> nor are they ever referred to as “deacons.”<sup>3</sup> Instead, they are presented as preaching, baptizing, exorcising and curing the sick and lame; curing the lame is the only curing mentioned in these verses (Acts 8:5-8). The baptizing faculty of the original seven is recorded in Acts 8:36-39.

The following quote is from a website entitled “New Life” and concerns itself with the lack of reference to “deacon” anywhere in Acts, and what, specifically, was his ministry. It is pertinent to the ministry of the deacon as a minister in the role of charity (which could have or can have the meaning of waiter, i.e., waiting on tables or in the role social worker);<sup>4</sup> or in the role of a preacher (expounding on the Word of the Lord as found in Sacred Scripture). Both of these, charity and word, are prescribed by *Lumen Gentium* from the Second Vatican Council, in paragraph 29. In the case of Acts 6:1-6, caring for the Greek widows fits the definition of “facilitating the welfare of communities, individuals, families and groups.” The text of this quote is as follows:

“Whether the seven men had a charitable ministry (*diakonia*) of

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<sup>1</sup> All scripture quotes are from *The Catholic Study Bible, The New American Bible, Revised Edition*, ed. Donald Senior, John J. Collins, Mary Ann Getty, (New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 2011), (hereafter *NABRE*)

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, footnote to verse 6:2, 1536

<sup>3</sup> See the last paragraph in the quote from the [New Life](#) website below.

<sup>4</sup> I use the definition of social worker as defined in Wikipedia; “**Social work** (emphasis in the original) is an academic and professional discipline that seeks to facilitate the welfare of communities, individuals, families, and groups,”; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_work](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_work), accessed 2 August 2016, 07:01, citing, Shuttlesworth, Guy (2015). *Social Work and Social Welfare*. Cengage Learning. p. 31. ISBN 130548066X. Retrieved 22 February 2016

administering funds or a more practical ministry (*diakonia*) of serving food, their care of the Hellenist widows allowed the apostles to spend more time exercising their ministry (*diakonia*) of prayer and preaching (Acts 6:1-3).

While the Seven were active in important ministry, it is unlikely that they held the office of deacon. They were set apart and commissioned with prayer and the laying on of hands, but this did not necessarily denote ordination into an office, especially at this early stage of the church. In Acts 13:2-3, for example, Paul and Barnabas were commissioned for a specific ministry in response to a temporary situation, and were prayed over with the laying on of hands; but Paul and Barnabas were not office holders in the church at that time.

The seven men are never referred to as “deacons” (*diakonoï*) anywhere in the New Testament. Considering Luke’s care with the language, the fact that he never refers to the Seven as “deacons” (*diakonoï*) in Acts is significant. Luke may have written Acts sometime between 80-90 AD. By the 60s, the word “deacon” (*diakonos*) was being used as a ministry title in some churches (e.g. the church in Philippi), yet Luke chose not to use this word for the Seven. Therefore, it is doubtful that they were the first official deacons of the church. However, the long standing debate [15] continues for some. With or without an official title, the Seven were effective in their sacred ministry which facilitated the spread of the Christian message and mission.”<sup>5</sup>

I mention the controversy about the meaning of Acts 6:1-6 in light of the books by John N. Collins<sup>6</sup> and his studies on the *diak* words and its cognates. I do not have the space here to explore the questions of the meaning of “waiting on tables,”<sup>7</sup> but the comments of Archbishop Emeritus Alfred Hughes<sup>8</sup> of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, the immediate predecessor of the current Archbishop, Gregory M. Aymond, primarily focus on this social dimension for and of the Church. The Archbishop told me, “I experienced ambivalent feelings about deploying and assigning deacons, primarily, in parish ministry.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://newlife.id.au/church-history/the-ministry-of-the-seven-men-in-acts-6/>, accessed 26 July 2016, 15:20, information concerning the author of this blog, Marg Mowczko, can be found here: <http://newlife.id.au/about/>, accessed 5 Aug 2016, 14:25, and here: <http://newlife.id.au/equality-and-gender-issues/towards-biblical-equality-my-story/>, accessed 8 August 2016, 08:06

<sup>6</sup> John N. Collins, *Diakonia, Re-interpreting the Ancient Sources* (Oxford University Press, 1990); *Diakonia Studies, Critical Issues in Ministry* (Oxford University Press, 2014)

<sup>7</sup> NABRE, footnote to verse 6:2, 1536

<sup>8</sup> I cannot thank Archbishop Hughes enough for the time he gave me to conduct this interview

Because my conviction from understanding the original ministry of the deacon and the rich possibilities of the permanent diaconate ministry...was to extend the Church to the peripheries<sup>9</sup> of Church life and reach people that the priests and bishop were having difficulty reaching because of their responsibilities providing the ordinary threefold ministry to the people that already were off parish antennae.”<sup>10</sup>

It seems as if Archbishop Hughes’ interpretation of the function of the deacon, at least in the deacon’s social ministry is in line with the Church’s understanding of the role of the deacon in his threefold ministry of word, liturgy and charity, especially the charity aspect of the function of the deacon. As Deacon Michael Ross says, in his review of the books by John Collins, the Church has decided the role of the deacon and this decision is what it will be,

“But Roman Catholic theology, from its earliest days, has rejected this approach [Collins approach to the meaning of the *diak* word and its cognates ‘which he finds (fatally) wanting in their support for the contemporary diaconate, and not in the role of tradition’] and continued to do so after the Reformation...the joining of scripture and tradition, as *Dei Verbum* 8-10 notes, gives the church an on-going role in interpreting scripture and tradition in the light of each other...On this view,...it is also free to apply its inspired tradition of understanding about this evidence.”<sup>11</sup>

Our current Archbishop seems to have a different view from Archbishop Hughes of what social ministry in general is, or what diocesan versus parish social ministry is or, maybe

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<sup>9</sup> The word “peripheries” used by Archbishop Hughes is in the context of using deacons to extend the ministry of the Church to reach people at the margins (peripheries) or the fringes of Church life; or, those who had given up on the Church and could be reached by the deacon by virtue of his (the deacon’s) position, as an ordained minister, in the work force, grocery stores, pharmacies, etc.; to meet people where they were.

<sup>10</sup> I personally interviewed Archbishop Hughes on Thursday, 23 June 2016 and that interview was recorded and is available for anyone interested.

<sup>11</sup> Deacon Michael Ross, *Josephinum Diaconal Review*, Fall 2015 (Pontifical College Josephinum, Columbus, OH), 108

there are constraints that he must deal with of which I am not aware, regarding the social construct of the ministry of the deacon, at least as concerning archdiocesan activities of prison, hospital, hospice, homeless shelter, etc. ministries, especially where these are additional , in addition to an assigned parish ministry.<sup>12</sup> My own experience as a member of a class of ten is that only one serving deacon is assigned a diocesan ministry of charity, the rest of the ten being assigned only to a local parish and, possibly, to another diocesan ministry such as the Tribunal, which may not be easily classified as a social ministry. I will address my view of the social dimension of the Tribunal, a.k.a., annulment ministry, a bit later in this paper.

Of the two subsequent formation (2012 and 2015), both of which had at least twenty candidates each ordained to the Order of Deacon, there were as few as two or as many as five in each class that were assigned to a diocesan charitable ministry in addition to their parish assignments.<sup>13</sup> I think the reason for this pattern is that some of the pastors of parishes look upon the deacon assigned to his parish in a possessive sense; he is not to be shared with anyone else. These pastors see the deacon as having plenty of work to perform in the parish and, since the deacon already has a secular job, he would not have enough time to devote to a diocesan social ministry, parish social ministry, a parish ministry other than social, work and home life if he also had the additional diocesan

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<sup>12</sup> See footnote 38. This footnote references the statement of Father William Philbin, the first National Director of the Permanent Diaconate for the USCCB

<sup>13</sup> I know this to be true, the assignment of parish and diocesan ministries, as two of the Formation Group of 2012 are assigned to the same parish I am and I mentored two candidates of the 2015 Formation Group for four years.

assignment of a diocesan social ministry.<sup>14</sup> I'll develop this thought a little further as Archbishop Hughes also mentions it later in the interview.<sup>15</sup>

My point in quoting from Acts 6:1-6 is to present the Church as hierarchical, that is, the Twelve Apostles could and did assign (ordain(?)) other men to ministries they deemed necessary for the salvation of souls or, at best, for the smooth functioning of the Church. The authority to appoint others to perform tasks such as the Twelve Apostles and their successors, comes directly from the Twelve Apostles as recorded in the Book of Acts. In addition, the Second Vatican Council, which Council that ultimately restored the diaconate as a permanent and separate order, says in *Lumen Gentium* (henceforth LG), underscores the hierarchical nature of the Church, "In order to shepherd the people of God and to increase its numbers without cease, Christ the Lord set up in his Church a variety of offices which aim at the good of the whole body."<sup>16</sup> I understand the words, "...Christ the Lord set up in his Church a variety of offices..." to mean that those originally commissioned by him (the Twelve Apostles) had the authority, and their successors, to set up the Church in whatever way they deemed fit to carry out the other part of the instruction to "...shepherd the people of God and to increase its numbers without cease..."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> This is entirely my thought and based on my own experience as an ordained deacon in a parish and not having an assigned diocesan ministry that is strictly social in dimension. I am assigned to the Tribunal as an Auditor but I have never really exercised this role except for once and then the archdiocese changed Judicial Vicars and that role has ceased to function.

<sup>15</sup> I conducted this interview of Archbishop Hughes on 23 June 2016 and will reference it in other sections of this paper. Unfortunately, our current Archbishop, Gregory Aymond could not fit me into his busy schedule.

<sup>16</sup> *Vatican Council II, The Conciliar and Postconciliar Documents, New Revised Edition* (henceforth *Vatican Council II*), ed. Austin Flannery, OP (Collegeville, MN, Liturgical Press, 2014), *Lumen Gentium, The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, 369, citing *Lumen Gentium*, 18 (hereafter *Documents*)

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, 369, citing *Lumen Gentium*, 18

Sometime during the fourth century, the diaconate started to become less of a distinct order and more of a transitional order along the way to the priesthood.<sup>18</sup> The transitional order was a revision of the original order of the deacon established by the Twelve and it prevailed until the Second Vatican Council, when the Church Fathers chose to restore the diaconate as a permanent order.<sup>19</sup> The Permanent Diaconate was considered at the Council of Trent but its affirmation was never promulgated and was never mentioned as a permanent order for 400 years.<sup>20</sup> At the Second Vatican Council, “after the Council of Trent’s unfulfilled decision to restore the diaconate, the Latin Church reinstates the diaconate as a permanent degree of the hierarchy.”<sup>21</sup> “The Second Vatican Council declared that “the diaconal ministry should be reborn in the Church as a proper ministry and not only as a stage for candidates to the presbyterate.”<sup>22</sup>

### **The Beginnings in the Archdiocese of New Orleans**

The norms were promulgated in *Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem* on 18 June 1967, some two years after the end of the Second Vatican Council, and the New Orleans archdiocese, under the guidance of Archbishop Philip Matthew Hannan, commenced its first ordination class in the fall of 1972 scheduled for ordination in 1974. The formation period at that time was projected at only two years; this schedule has been expanded since to four years of formation. The four years do not include a prior year of discernment for a total of five

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<sup>18</sup> William Ditewig, *The Emerging Diaconate, Servant Leaders in a Servant Church* (New York/Mahweh NJ, Paulist Press, 2007), 75

<sup>19</sup> Vatican Council II, 387, citing *Lumen Gentium* 29

<sup>20</sup> *Compendium on the Diaconate, A Resource for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons*, ed. Enzo Petrolino, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (Washington DC, 2015), 110

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 111

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 112

years of formation (I will further discuss the development of these formation periods later in this paper).

Why did Archbishop Hannan institute the permanent diaconate in this archdiocese? In his book, *The Archbishop Wore Combat Boots*, and supported by the words of Archbishop Emeritus Hughes himself we find the answer.

To understand the reasons for the institution of the permanent diaconate in this archdiocese by Archbishop Hannan one has to infer the rationale from some passages in the Archbishop's book and then examine Archbishop Hughes' own remembrances of Archbishop Hannan. I will also include some thoughts from Deacon Jerry Martinez who was a member of the second Formation Group for the Archdiocese of New Orleans and was ordained in 1976.<sup>23</sup>

Archbishop Hannan was assigned to this archdiocese on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September 1965, while he was present at the Second Vatican Council <sup>24</sup> (coincidentally, this is also the day he died in 2011 at the age of 98, in New Orleans) and some three weeks after the devastation to the city and surrounding area by Hurricane Betsy on 9 September 1965.

He arrived in New Orleans directly from Rome and was immediately given a tour of some parts of the Archdiocese by senior priests of the Archdiocese.<sup>25</sup> It seems as if this tour resulted in the first thought the Archbishop had of a social ministry and the

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<sup>23</sup> telephone interview of Deacon Jerry Martinez on 1 September 2016 by this writer and I cannot thank Deacon Martinez enough for giving me the time for the interview. The interview notes are available for anyone who wishes to review.

<sup>24</sup> *Combat Boots*, 263

<sup>25</sup> Interview of Deacon Jerry Martinez

Archbishop was very familiar with the thoughts and documents of his brother bishops that had attended the Second Vatican Council.<sup>26</sup>

One of the first items on his agenda was to attack “our community’s social problems”<sup>27</sup> and, as a start, he promoted the archdiocese’s housing program for the elderly called Christopher Homes. He initiated an expanded apostolate in the archdiocese then with ten new programs. Two years later that was expanded by opening six, year-round community centers.<sup>28</sup> The episcopal motto of Archbishop Hannan was, “*Caritas Vinculum Perfectionis*” which is Latin for “Charity is the Bond of Perfection,”<sup>29</sup> and it is also the motto of the high school named after him. From Archbishop Hughes’ own words and his knowledge of Archbishop Hannan’s beliefs we note another reason Hannan instituted the permanent diaconate in New Orleans. Thus he says, “...knowing Archbishop Hannan, he wanted to initiate everything that he could, and he was part of Vatican II and knew this was an option and so, I can just see him running with it because he was freed up to do so.”<sup>30</sup> Clearly Hannan took advantage of the Authority vested in him according to *Lumen Gentium* 29 and *Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem* to establish the diaconate and use it to further his social ministry inclinations.

In addition to Archbishop Hughes remembrances of Archbishop Hannan, Deacon Jerry Martinez, in a telephone interview I conducted with him on 1 September 2016, has similar remembrances of Archbishop Hannan. In this interview, Deacon Martinez says

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<sup>26</sup> Deacon Martinez interview

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, 278

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, 283

<sup>29</sup> Archbishop Philip Matthew Hannan with Nancy Collins and Peter Finney, Jr., *The Archbishop Wore Combat Boots, Memoir of an Extraordinary Life* (Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., Huntington, IN, 2010), 172 (taken from Col 3:14), (hereafter referred to as *Combat Boots*)

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Archbishop Hughes

Archbishop Hannan, “very strongly wanted to implement the documents and desires of the Second Vatican Council, as he understood them...he understood the importance of the direction the Church wished to go with the diaconate and felt he had to move in that direction.”<sup>31</sup>

So, it was apparent the archbishop was very interested in the social ministry of the church and did things because he could and, because he could, he turned to the permanent diaconate when he saw the impact that permanent deacons could have on his Social Apostolate.<sup>32</sup>

With commencement of the first formation group of the Permanent Diaconate in this archdiocese there were considerable<sup>33</sup> presbyteral reservations about the restoration of this new order. Those reservations “by some hesitant priests have largely evaporated, an official of the US bishops’ committee on the permanent diaconate said...(this official was Father William Philbin, executive director of the committee secretariat and who later became the first National Director of the Permanent Diaconate<sup>34</sup>).”<sup>35</sup> One reservation or

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<sup>31</sup> Deacon Martinez interview

<sup>32</sup> This is an inference of mine as I have no first-hand knowledge of why the permanent diaconate was instituted by Archbishop Hannan — this is inferred on my part by the references in his book regarding the social dimension of the permanent diaconate, his own interests, his war experiences (*Combat Boots*, 141, “...such an incomprehensible barbaric insult to the human spirit.”) and his episcopal motto. He saw first-hand the dead and survivors of the war in combat and in a concentration camp at Wöbbelin, 141

<sup>33</sup> *Considerable* is my word as Father Philbin, in the *Clarion Herald* article of March 1972, referenced a four-year study done by the NCCB on “priestly life and ministry. That study showed that at least 80% of U.S. bishops, religious superiors and diocesan and religious priests polled favored ‘introduction of the married diaconate whenever and however the local church chooses’ and the survey’s show of support for the permanent diaconate program either means that only a small minority of priests felt threatened by it ‘or their generous interest in the total apostolate must be the key factor — because they’re for it.’” I use that word, considerable, based on the stories I have heard from the early classes of deacons in this archdiocese.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Archbishop Hughes. Father Philbin was also originally from the archdiocese of Chicago and upon becoming the first national Director of the Permanent Diaconate moved from Chicago to Washington, DC, the home of the NCCB, which became the USCCB.

<sup>35</sup> The *Clarion Herald*, *The Permanent Diaconate is Gaining In Favor*, March 1972

“objection to the diaconate was that it might threaten the traditional role of the priest — since a deacon can do liturgically nearly everything a priest can do except say Mass, anoint the sick and hear confessions. But most priests who felt this way at first have come to see the deacon ‘as a bridge bringing lay people and priests together,” Father William Philbin said, continued, “They also realize that the deacon’s role is broader than just his liturgical function. The ministry of charitable service to individuals and the community is even more distinctive of the deacon.”<sup>36</sup>

My current pastor, Father Mark Lomax (a priest of thirty-four years at the time, 2013), had dinner with the deacons assigned to the parish he took over on 1 July 2013, and stated that in his opinion “deacons saved parish ministry.” This statement of Father Lomax and the statements of Father William Philbin coincide with the views of Archbishop Hughes that the purpose of the diaconate “was to extend the Church to the peripheries of Church life and reach people that the priests and bishop were having difficulty reaching because of their responsibilities providing the ordinary threefold ministry to the people that already were off parish antennae...” By the peripheries I take Archbishop Hughes to mean the margins or the fringes, the people that the pastors are not able engage due to the demands of parish administration; the deacon could encounter these people in their everyday life situations in the workplace, grocery store, the pharmacy, gas stations and in many other situations of daily life.

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<sup>36</sup> *ibid.* There is considerable disagreement about this viewpoint in the theological literature which continues to this day—cf. — Keating’s book, *The Deacon Reader* and the Ditewig, Cummings book on *The State of the Question*.

This statement of Father Philbin lends support to Archbishop Hughes' view that a deacon could or should be assigned to an archdiocesan ministry in addition to the parish assignment, or alternatively, that a deacon assigned to a parish should be assigned by the pastor to expand parish ministry to the peripheries of the parish<sup>37</sup>. It seems as if my pastor and Archbishop Bishop Hughes have the same common objective and that is to expand the reach of the Church (parish and the diocese) to the peripheries or margins or to people that have been unreachable by the Church for whatever reason. They may have a slight difference of opinion, since both of them are two different people and two different people, generally, at least in this writer's experience, have divergent opinions as to how to achieve a desired outcome, as to how that expansion can be implemented, but the goal is the same: to expand the ministry of the Church to the peripheries (margins or fringes) by use of the deacon.

In light of this common goal (as indicated by Father Mark Lomax and Father Philbin) and by Archbishop Emeritus Hughes we have this article from the *Clarion Herald*:

“the Secretariat director, Father William Philbin, cited the four-year National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) study on priestly life and ministry. That study showed that at least 80 percent of U. S. bishops, religious superiors and diocesan and religious priests polled favored ‘introduction of the married diaconate whenever and however the local church chooses...The survey’s show of support for the diaconate program either means that only a small minority of priests felt threatened by it,’ Father Philbin said, ‘or their generous interest in the total apostolate must be the key factor — because they’re for it.’”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Although it seems that both missions could be accomplished by the deacon, either in the parish or in addition to the parish, in his role in a diocesan ministry, would be in contact with and come into contact with the people that feel as if the Church has abandoned them or they have abandoned the Church. By Church I mean the Catholic Church and participation in its life as fully as possible commensurate with their life situation.

<sup>38</sup> *The Clarion Herald, The permanent diaconate is gaining in favor*, March, 1968

In support of Father Philbin's "they're for it" quote above I include a scattering of quotes from priests of this archdiocese cited when the permanent diaconate was accepting men for the first formation group in 1972.

Father Ignatius Roppolo; "There are so many needs today, and so many people, that a priest can't really care for his people in the former sense of the word."<sup>39</sup> Father John Bendix; "feels the work the deacon will be doing will be rendered more acceptable by the fact that he is ordained, and considered a member of the clergy."<sup>40</sup> Father Joseph Putnam said, "The diaconate offers us a tremendous way of developing black leadership in the black community. It will certainly bring about a closer identity between the Church community and the people it serves."<sup>41</sup> Father Francis Amadee struck a note of caution, however: "'Certainly the aid permanent deacons render will be tremendous for the church,' he said, 'but we do have to prepare our people for them and toward accepting the role they will fill in the parish.'"<sup>42</sup> Father Crosby Kern; "What the deacon will be doing in the parish will be decided in terms of the needs of the parish and the individual talents of the deacon"<sup>43</sup>

From the indications of the priests and the NCCB mentioned above, it seems Archbishop Hannan had good reason, and support from his brother bishops and the local presbyterate, to institute the permanent diaconate in the Archdiocese of New Orleans. In the *Clarion Herald* article of March 1972, Father Philbin said that "nine permanent deacons have already been ordained (nationally) since the first training period began in

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<sup>39</sup> The *Clarion Herald*, Diaconate is 'workable', 13 April 1972

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*

1969. Thirty-nine other candidates are scheduled for ordination during the summer, thirteen dioceses have deacon training programs, one other has announced plans to establish one, and seven or eight others are well along in planning them...There are currently 425 candidates nationwide.”<sup>44</sup>

In spite of the good reasons for the re-establishment of the permanent diaconate cited by Father Philbin and plenty of support Archbishop Hannan might have had, there seems to have been some opposition to, or a certain questioning of, the plan to reinstitute the permanent diaconate in the Archdiocese. In an article in the *Clarion Herald* dated March 30, 1972 and authored by the Rev. John L. Newfield, a priest of the Archdiocese and connected to the permanent diaconate program wrote,

“Some people wonder why there should be a restoration of the diaconate at a time when laymen are doing more and more in the church. There is even wonderment that there should be deacons when laymen have been delegated to perform the functions of deacons. Yet those who exercise the functions of deacons can and should be fortified by the laying on of hands, which is an apostolic tradition...Further, those who serve the church of God should be more closely associated with the altar and empowered to be so associated by the laying on of hands. The sacramental grace of the diaconate will enable them to more efficaciously fulfill the ministry that is so often fulfilled today only by delegation and not by orders...The care of souls in the American Church will be shared by these men in the diaconal ministry.”<sup>45</sup>

Father Newfield’s quote reinforces the stress on the sacramental grace of ordination as mentioned in the *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons*. The quote from Father Newfield (his quote is from 1972 and is ahead of the time of the publication of the *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons*, published for the first

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<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> The *Clarion Herald*, *Permanent diaconate esteemed*, March 30, 1972

time in 1998 and a third printing in 2006). This Directory should not be confused with the *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States*, published in 2005 and a third printing in 2007. The text of the quote is as follows:

“sacramental grace of the diaconate will enable them to more efficaciously fulfill the ministry that is so often fulfilled today only by delegation and not by orders...The care of souls in the American Church will be shared by these men in diaconal ministry,” it is said “the sacrament of the diaconate develops this inclination: it makes the subject to share more closely in Christ’s spirit of service and imbues the will with a special grace so that in all his actions *he will be motivated by a new inclination to serve his brothers and sisters* (emphasis added).”<sup>46</sup>

This definition by the *Directory for the Life and Ministry of the Permanent Deacon* stresses the liturgical function of the deacon; that his role in the Sacred Liturgy sacramentalizes (imbues his will with a special grace) all of his ministry to the people of God and gives the deacon an *impetus* to serve his brothers and sisters wherever he finds them, the peripheries, especially the fringes or margins.<sup>47</sup>

Some of the uncertainty about the need for another ordained minister in the New Orleans diocese in the early 1970’s was due to the fact that more and more lay faithful had taken on more roles in the Sacred Liturgy, albeit by delegation as opposed to being ordained for them.<sup>48</sup> Father Newfield also commented on this role of the deacon in comparison to the (then) expanding role of the laity, “many laymen are doing what a permanent deacon will be doing. They, however, are doing it by delegation of the Holy

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<sup>46</sup> *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons* (USCCB, Washington, DC, 2006), 49

<sup>47</sup> See footnote 51. It is worth noting there are currently 18,000+ ordained deacons in the U.S. (CARA, *A Portrait of the Permanent Diaconate: A Study for the USCCB 2014-2015*) and 22 candidates in formation in the Archdiocese of New Orleans

<sup>48</sup> *Combat Boots*, 440, citing LG 10, 11 and Code of Canon Law, c. 1250; also see the answer to question #1a from our Director, Appendix A

See or the local Ordinary. The permanent deacon will be doing these things, serving his brothers and sisters in their daily needs, spiritually or physically, and by representing them on the altar, through ordination.”<sup>49</sup>

The year was 1972, the Second Vatican Council had ended seven years earlier, and the desires of the council fathers were being implemented across the world but especially in this country. At the time, lay people were, in fact, taking on more and more the roles of ministry (social and liturgical) in the Church as the Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People also issued by the Council permitted. Questions as to why another member of the hierarchy was necessary seemed to fit the times. Father Newfield effectively argued for the closing of the door on all objections to the restoration of the diaconate in this Archdiocese. In support of Father Newfield’s arguments for the restoration of the permanent diaconate, I quote from Deacon William Ditewig from his blog, *Deacons Today: Servants in a Servant Church*, notes:

“The entire Church is called to be a servant-church, a diaconal church. Pope Paul VI repeatedly taught that deacons are to be ‘the animators of the Church’s service,’ and St. John Paul II carried it a step further when he referred to the diaconate as ‘the Church’s service sacramentalized.’ These popes were echoing the teaching of and the decisions of the bishops of the Second Vatican Council when they determined that the Church’s *diakonia* should be a permanent part of sacramental life of the Church. Being a deacon is not simply some activity which a person takes on themselves, at their own initiative; rather, it is believed to be a call from God as discerned through the help of the broader Church.”<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> The Clarion Herald, *Service at grass roots emphasized by deacons*, 6 April 1972

<sup>50</sup> *Deacons Today: Servants in a Servant Church*, <https://billditewig.wordpress.com/2016/07/17/terrorism-dachau-and-diaconate-perspectives-and-pbs/>, accessed 18 July 2016 13:40 (hereafter known as *Deacons Today*)

I take this quote of Deacon Ditewig to mean the deacon is called by God to be of service to his brothers and sisters in whatever capacity, as the whole Church is called to be a servant. Deacon Ditewig further emphasizes the role of the deacon at the altar and his liturgical function “sacramentalizing” his service to his brothers and sisters.

All of us in the Church are called to be of service to our brothers and sisters but some, deacons, are called to a different level of service in that their service is sacramental emphasized by Father Newfield.<sup>51</sup> To further support the point made by Deacon Ditewig above I note the dialogue between an ordaining bishop during the Rite of Ordination of Deacons and the Director of Clergy for the local diocese. The bishop responds in answer to the Director’s recommendation that he finds the ordinands to be worthy of the office of deacon. And the bishop replies, “Relying on the help of the Lord God and our Savior Jesus Christ, we choose these, our brothers, for the Order of the diaconate.”<sup>52</sup>

The point to be made is that the deacon is chosen by the Church. This calling by the community is further echoed by Father John Favalora (the first Director of the Permanent Diaconate in this archdiocese), “This is, after all, a true vocation, a true calling by the community when the candidate is presented by his community as a candidate for the permanent diaconate.”<sup>53</sup>

If the entire Church is called to be a servant-church, then the deacon is called to emulate that servant aspect of the Church in a special way, a sacramental way by virtue of his ordination and not delegation.

### **The Formation Periods in the Archdiocese of New Orleans**

In the first years of the permanent diaconate in this archdiocese, the formation consisted of two years, and the classes were held at Notre Dame Seminary on Tuesday and

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<sup>51</sup> Also see Appendix A, #9

<sup>52</sup> Roman Pontifical, Ordination Rite of a Deacon

<sup>53</sup> *The Clarion Herald, Service at grass roots emphasized by deacons*, 6 April 1972

Thursday nights from 7:30 to 9:30 PM each night (not an especially easy schedule as the candidates also held secular jobs and had families). Each semester would consist of two classes; one would be Introductory Scripture and the Gospels and the other would be Introduction to Theology and Revelation.<sup>54</sup> For a further clarification of the syllabus of the first Formation Group for this archdiocese I offer a remembrance by Deacon Jerry Martinez as to the courses he took in his own formation as he was of the second formation group (ordained in 1976).<sup>55</sup>

Early on, at least with this first formation group, classes were held in Houma, LA to accommodate the men chosen from the Houma-Thibodaux area. Of the twenty-one men chosen for this formation group, six were from the Houma-Thibodaux area.<sup>56</sup> All classes were taught by priests of this archdiocese: Father Robert Vincent of St. Pius X parish and Rev. John Moore, S.M. of Notre Dame Seminary. By comparison, later in the life of the permanent diaconate in this archdiocese, the instructors were deacons with advanced degrees and then, with the arrival of Archbishop Gregory Aymond, some of the courses would be taught by lay instructors from the diocesan seminary with Ph.D.'s, Notre Dame, and would also include priests of the archdiocese, also with advanced degrees.

It should be noted that there were no classes on spirituality nor were there classes in homiletics in the first formation group. That may be a function of the way the courses were set up, since Father John Favalora, who administered the program at the time, indicated that there would be a third year of formation, albeit after ordination, for continuing education and specialization courses such as these.<sup>57</sup> But, in his article in the *Clarion Herald*, Father Favalora does not indicate what continuing education courses were offered nor does he indicate what were the subjects of the specialization courses.

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<sup>54</sup> The *Clarion Herald*, *21 chosen men, Permanent Diaconate to begin September 19* [1972]

<sup>55</sup> Deacon Martinez is able to remember courses in Homiletics, Theology (Trinitarian theology), Clinical Pastoral Counselling and Sacred Scripture. The course in Sacred Scripture was taken for two semesters, Old and new testament in each semester (this is my conjecture as in my own formation that is how the course in Sacred Scripture was divided). This material is from the telephone interview I conducted with Deacon Martinez on 1 September 2016.

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> The *Clarion Herald*, *Service at the grass roots emphasized by deacons*, 6 April 1972

The second formation group (facetiously known as “second class deacons” by members of that group) was also for a period of two years.<sup>58</sup> Presumably, they had the same limited intellectual formation.<sup>59</sup>

Beginning with the formation group for ordination in 1980 (1978 did not have an ordination class) the program expanded to three years with additional course components being added;<sup>60</sup> it stayed at the three year duration until the formation group of 1991. That group’s formation length was for three and a half years and the subsequent group (1993) was also for three and a half years. Beginning in 1996, formation was extended to four years and that continued until the next group in 1999.

In 2001 the formation was extended, again, for an additional year making a total of five years. That five years of formation is the current norm for formation in the Archdiocese of New Orleans and includes one year of discernment, one year of Aspirancy and three years of Candidacy.<sup>61</sup> The archdiocese has had a formation group every two years from 2006 until and through the group of 2012.<sup>62</sup> The next group after 2012 was the 2015 formation group and the current formation group is scheduled for ordination in 2018 for an interval of three years between groups.

All formation (at least from 2001 to the present) has been conducted according to the norms contained in the Directory already mentioned, published in 1998 and reprinted in 2006, and the current directory, *National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States* (hereafter referred to as *National Directory*). It

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<sup>58</sup> I have the lengths of each formation group since 1974 from our current Director, Deacon Ray Duplechain, in an email from him to me and that email is readily available for anyone that desires to view it.

<sup>59</sup> From my telephone interview with Deacon Martinez, his actual description of the intellectual formation is, “we had abbreviated courses.”

<sup>60</sup> I am sure there was an earlier Directory for the Formation of Permanent Deacons but I cannot find it. The first directory I can find is one published in 1998 by the Vatican (printed in the US, USCCB, Washington, DC, 2006), specifically, Congregation for Catholic Education and Congregation for the Clergy entitled *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons and Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons*.

<sup>61</sup> For the syllabus for the 2010 Formation Group (my own) please see Appendix B

<sup>62</sup> The formation of the classes of 2006, 2008 and 2010 were all delayed due to the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina. The '06 class was delayed for six months and the '08 and '10 classes were delayed for a full year.

was first printed in February 2005 and the latest printing is from August of 2007. I mention two Directories as the formation periods of 1999 to 2005 was under the guidance of the *Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons* and from 2005 to the present, formation is under the guidance of the latter Directory.

The norms address formation according to four areas: human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral.<sup>63</sup> I have not been able to find further details of the formation of the groups from 1974 to 1999 as these groups would have entered formation and completed formation well before the Directory of 1998 and that of 2005 were printed and implemented.<sup>64</sup>

The four areas of formation: human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral will be defined only briefly as the details can be found in the current *National Directory* on the pages already cited in footnote 48 on the previous page.

The human dimension: “a participant comes to formation with a history of interrelationships with other people. Formation for ministry begins with human formation and development. Participants ‘should therefore cultivate a series of human qualities, not only out of proper and due growth and realization of self, but also with a view to the ministry.’”<sup>65</sup>

The spiritual dimension: “Human formation leads to and finds its completion in the spiritual dimension of formation, which constitutes the heart and unifying center of every Christian formation. Its aim is to tend to the development of the new life received in Baptism.’ Many directions lead to this goal, all of them fundamentally the work of the Holy

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<sup>63</sup> *National Directory* (USCCB, Washington, DC, 2007), 51-62

<sup>64</sup> *I would not have any access to the formation directives of these groups since I did not enter into formation until November of 2004 and there is no archival information regarding formation in this diocese that I am aware of and according to our current director, Deacon Ray Duplechain, the historical data we did have was destroyed in Hurricane Katrina.*

<sup>65</sup> *National Directory*, 51, citing Pope Saint John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (hereafter referred to as *PDV*) (*I Will Give You Shepherds*) (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1992)

Spirit. The spiritual life is, therefore, dynamic and never static...”<sup>66</sup>

The intellectual dimension: “Intellectual formation offers the participant ‘substantial nourishment’ for the pastoral, human, and spiritual dimensions of his life. Intellectual formation is a ‘precious instrument’ for effective discernment and ministry...”<sup>67</sup>

The pastoral dimension: “An integral formation must relate the human, spiritual, and intellectual dimensions to pastoral practice. ‘The whole formation imparted to [the participants]...aims at preparing them to enter into communion with the charity of Christ...Hence their formation in its different aspects must have a fundamentally pastoral character...”<sup>68</sup>

It is difficult to imagine how some of the early formation groups of only two or three years addressed, much less completed, all the four formation dimensions. Perhaps it was included in the early instruction but the evidence is not available. One might wonder especially about human formation, since pastoral and spiritual formation might well have been addressed in the local parish. Organizing a program of human formation is much more difficult and would have had to be conducted centrally. The suspicion remains that these dimensions were not addressed at all, or if addressed, only marginally.<sup>69</sup>

### **Relations Between Presbyters and Deacons in this Archdiocese**

From the experience of this writer the relationship between presbyters and deacons is, for the most, part very friendly, cooperative and cordial.<sup>70</sup> I have had three pastors since

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<sup>66</sup> National Directory, 53, citing *Congregation for Catholic Education, Basic Norms for the Formation of Permanent Deacons* (hereafter referred to as *BNFPD*) (*Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Diaconorum Permantiam*) (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1998), 71

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, citing *PDV*, 79

<sup>68</sup> *National Directory*, 59, citing *PDV*, 57; cf. *BNFPD*, 85

<sup>69</sup> I have anecdotal evidence of at least one candidate each from the Formation Groups of 2006 and 2008 being ordained but not being given the faculty to preach. Unfortunately, this is only what I have been told and I do not have hard evidence of either case.

<sup>70</sup> See Appendix A, #6, 7 & 8

ordination, three parochial vicars since ordination, the three (of each) came in the space of three years, and my relationship with them and with those of other deacons in the parish have been, with all of the pastors and parochial vicars, quite friendly. I count my first pastor as a personal friend and he does me, and I continue to see him frequently.

This is not to say that all priests are as friendly as the three mentioned above. Some are very protective to this day of their functions as presbyter and, sometimes, exclude the deacon from being a part of the conversation, appropriately so when generic matters are invoking the internal forum.<sup>71</sup> For the most part, and in my case, my relationship with the priests of this archdiocese has been very pleasant. Were there more time for research, I would seek organized data from other deacons and priests with a survey. This task is for future work.

### **Duties of Deacons in this Archdiocese**

The early classes of deacons were all assigned diocesan ministries in addition to their parish assignments. Some deacons were and still are assigned to homeless shelters, some are assigned to hospitals as chaplains, some are assigned to nursing homes, some are assigned to hospice work and some are assigned to prison ministry. Some take on volunteer roles as those deacons in my parish of hospital chaplain, fire department chaplain, Coroner's Office chaplain and some of my classmates that have taken on the

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<sup>71</sup> This is from first-hand experience of a conversation between two priests and myself and the conversation totally ignored my presence so I just walked away. The conversation concerned the internal forum, generically, and I, as a deacon, have no responsibilities regarding that as I cannot hear confession. Unfortunately, I have no documented evidence of this conversation and the roles the three of us had, as it is purely anecdotal; also, see Appendix A, #1b

duties of hospice chaplains and at least one of my classmates has volunteered to be a minister for the local Stella Maris ministry.

Of the four deacons in my own parish, one is a chaplain for the Coroner's office and is a chaplain for the Louisiana State Police. The Coroner's office entails being on call two days out of every month and the State Police assignment entails riding with a patrol officer once every week. Another of our deacons is the chaplain to the fire department district located in our parish boundary and a third deacon has taken on the duties of being a chaplain at a local hospital in addition to being a mentor couple with his wife to those engaged couples entering marriage. All meet people "where they are" and bring the Church to that specific encounter.

I have been assigned to the parish annulment ministry and have been involved in this for five years. I consider this to be a very difficult ministry because of the amount of time required to read the narrative evidence presented by each petitioner, sometimes as many as ten or eleven times. This does not count the times meeting with each petitioner to counsel them as to how and what to say to get to the specific ground for the invalidity. Again, I consider this to be meeting people "where they are" and, in a sense, going to the "peripheries" or "margins" to bring people back into the life of the Church.<sup>72</sup>

This meeting people "where they are" and going to the "margins" or "peripheries" involves meeting people who have either been away from the Church, or the Sacrament of the Eucharist, due to some misperceptions on their part. These misperceptions

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<sup>72</sup> I had one petitioner that said that if the annulment was not granted they were going to the Episcopal Church. I asked what that was going to do for them and I was told they would be able to go to communion. What ensued was a long conversation on Holy Orders and John's Gospel, specifically, Chapter 6.

generally are the result of hearing from some “friend” that divorce excludes one from the Sacrament of the Eucharist.<sup>73</sup> Some of these people just want to “get right with the Church” by receiving an annulment. Most of these people are desperately trying to live their lives according to what the Church teaches and go about the process of petitioning for a Declaration of Nullity to either be in a position to remarry if the right person comes along or to “get right with the Church;” and some have been away as long as they have been remarried and wish to return to the Church.

It’s amazing to me to hear the stories of people involved in broken marriages and to listen to their explanations of why they want a decree of nullity. After a while, I get to the point that I actually relive each petitioner’s former marriage. The most satisfaction I get is when a petitioner gets a “Free to Marry” letter from the Tribunal. This feeling is especially strong if the narrative writing has been painful and the process has been long and arduous. I am also assigned to the Tribunal as an Auditor, I received that assignment some nine months post ordination after studying Canon Law for six months and focusing specifically on the canons associated with marriage.<sup>74</sup>

I can see how the parish pastor cannot do everything everywhere, especially as regards annulments as each case takes an enormous amount of time and most do not have that amount of time available. Once again, I and the other deacons in our parish, and I’m sure this story is told in every parish in the archdiocese, meet people “where they are” and

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<sup>73</sup> Only if one has divorced after marrying in the Church and also have become remarried civilly is one excluded from receiving the Eucharist.

<sup>74</sup> I did not realize I would be in the role of the Coordinator of Annulments for the parish as my wife and I undertook the classes in canon law only because it seemed as if it would be a good thing to know. Our Canon Law classes in formation covered a broad range of topics and did not hone in on marriage.

neither the parish pastor or his parochial vicar have the time to devote to these ministries due to the demands on their time regarding the sacramental life of the parish.

### **Where is the Permanent Diaconate Today in this Archdiocese**

I submitted a list of ten questions to the Permanent Diaconate Director for his input as to where he thinks the permanent diaconate stands today in this archdiocese, where has it been and where is it going and how was it before he became Director, when he was deacon working in a parish?

I can think of no better way to present this so I am presenting these questions and answers in his own words and punctuation and they can be referenced in Appendix A. I especially think the answer to question number four is telling, because the single largest limiting factor to the permanent diaconate, in this archdiocese at least, are the deacons themselves (at least in the opinion of our Director, and I would agree with him).

### **Conclusion**

As is the case nationwide, the permanent diaconate in the Archdiocese of New Orleans is not without its issues. In the view of the current deacon director In New Orleans there are issues with the deacons themselves<sup>75</sup> in the areas of Obedience, Humility and Charity. I presume these refer to the reluctance of some deacons to accept obediently what they are asked to do, some who parade their importance, and some who are reluctant to participate in charitable activities. In addition, the director indicates more help would be appreciated from deacons to encourage greater pastoral activities in their

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<sup>75</sup> See Appendix A, #4 (in its entirety) and #10

parishes and in defining new pastoral objectives.<sup>76</sup> The encouragement of pastoral activities and development of new objectives should be affirmed by pastors and not by the bishop, he argues, since pastors know their parish more intimately than the bishop does. They know best how to use their deacons in directing charitable work that needs to be initiated, maintained or expanded.

The Director's initial impression when he was placed in charge in 2010 due to the retirement of the previous Director was that, in most ways, the permanent diaconate in the Archdiocese of New Orleans was functioning, "as it was perceived by bishops (Hannan, Schulte, Hughes, and Aymond)."<sup>77</sup> So, it seems, that for the most part, the permanent diaconate in this archdiocese has been functioning as it was originally intended by Hannan with some adjusting by the current Archbishop George M. Aymond.

Permanent deacons are currently extensively involved in all aspects of social ministry at the diocesan and parish levels. To name a few: prison ministry (Orleans, Jefferson and St. Tammany parishes), addiction ministries (both drugs and pornography), hospice chaplains, hospital chaplains, the Tribunal and annulment ministries, RCIA programs in each parish, Masters of Ceremony for the liturgies presided over by the Archbishop, homeless shelters, Stella Maris and many others.

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<sup>76</sup> This particular area, pastoral encouragement and pastoral objectives, is of some concern as the formation team has informed all entering formation that the primary concern of the deacon is the practice of the virtue of charity and that each newly ordained deacon would be receiving a diocesan ministry in addition to their assigned parish ministry. As has been enumerated in this paper earlier (footnotes 12 and 38), our current Archbishop may have input from the pastors that deacons should be assigned to charitable ministry as discerned by them instead of him and, as such, the newly ordained deacons from the Formation Group of 2015 (Our Archbishop's first ordination class that he selected for formation and ordained) were not specifically assigned a diocesan ministry.

<sup>77</sup> See Appendix A, #1a

In light of the wide ranging ministry involvement by the permanent diaconate in the archdiocese at both the diocesan and parish levels, it seems the best way to conclude this paper is by citing our current Archbishop's own words. Archbishop Aymond, stated in a listening session held on September 23, 2015 for permanent deacons (of which there were about 150 in attendance), "I can't imagine this archdiocese without permanent deacons."

## Appendix A

The questions and answers to ten questions posed by me (black text) and the response of the Director for the Permanent Diaconate in the Archdiocese of New Orleans<sup>78</sup>:

- 1) “When you became Director, what were your thoughts regarding the permanent diaconate (in general, how did/do you expect the diaconate to function)?
  - a) From the Director’s perspective?

That the diaconate was in most ways functioning as it was perceived by the bishops (Hannan, Schulte, Hughes, and Aymond). There were areas of concern:

1. Faithfulness to mission of diaconate
2. How the functions of the deacon were understood against the backdrop of “who” a deacon is. That is vocation vs. actual current function.
3. Lack of understanding of others in the Church (bishops, presbyterate, religious, lay faithful). Need for catechesis.

- b) From a deacon’s perspective?

Deacon’s generally perceived the functioning of the diaconate as moments of frustration and struggle, in the midst of the joy of serving, with a perceived lack of support of their ministry. This is many times thought by the deacons that they are being singled out, when in fact all ministers feel this way at times.

- 2) What expectations did you have?

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<sup>78</sup> Once again, I owe an immense debt of gratitude to Deacon Ray Duplechain, the Archdiocese of New Orleans Director of the Permanent Diaconate, for his comments and time as he is an extremely busy man.

That all deacons could with proper communication, understand the complexity of the structure and working of the Church. That many challenges faced in service could be minimized through a better understanding of the virtues of Obedience, Humility, and Charity.

a) Were they fulfilled?

In many ways they were/are. There is a better sense of understanding among the deacons about the importance of “order” within the community. This of course is tempered by individual behaviors that oppose the common good. This is always a struggle in the Church and world, eg., lack of participation in continuing formation, retreats, and community events.

b) Were they already in place?

We had good leadership for 35 years through the Office of Diaconate. Under the Director Deacon Jim Swiler there was stability. Stability is a critical component of fulfilled expectations.

Not in place was a more personal and open style of communication. I think we have made strides in this area, even considering its inherent risks.

c) What were your first priorities for the permanent diaconate when you assumed the directorship for this archdiocese?

To bring a sense of stability to the transition from one director to the next. This in retrospect was and remains a daunting task of balancing resources, energies, and relationships; between deacons, priests, bishops, and the lay faithful.

i) Were they fulfilled?

Fractionally, at best. Priorities are complex and subjective. They are almost always driven by events and needs. Priorities can change in a moment and they have. This is a very challenging area of administration and service to the Church through the Office of Diaconate.

3) Do you or did you have any historical input regarding the diaconate from your predecessor?

Having worked with Deacon Swiler in ministry for more than 15 years in service through the Office of Diaconate there was ample mentoring and study of past events, priorities, and challenges. This is the single most important gift that the Office of Diaconate received as a result of the transition from Deacon Swiler to me. Others of course, may see this very differently.

4) When you were a deacon in the trenches, did you think the diaconate was used to its fullest?

No, not ever. This is not the fault of any one person or group of persons. There is enough responsibility for the lack of penetration of the ministry of deacon in the

Church. Chief among them are the deacons themselves. Again a prayerful engagement on a daily basis of the virtues of Obedience, Humility, and Charity. Clearly articulated pastoral objectives, practical encouragement, and more resources would be helpful in this area.

- a) If so, what would you have done differently?
- b) If not, what would you have done differently?
- c) Would you have added any additional responsibilities to the diaconate if it was deemed to be short in fulfilling your expectations?

No, there is plenty enough to do in Charity. One could go an entire life in ministry without more responsibilities being added.

- 5) Was there any resistance vocalized from the priests regarding the diaconate?

We have had good support from the presbyterate and there are no specific concerns. A caution would be that deacons should never be expected nor allowed to be perceived as mini-priests or to be trained in the same way as priests. Deacons and priests are different and distinct.

- 6) Was there any resistance vocalized from the deacons regarding the presbyterate?

This question could be perceived as negative but the truth is, whatever resistance exists among deacons would also exist among priests.

- 7) If the answer to #5 is yes, was it fixable from your viewpoint?

Better communication and dialogue between all ministers of the Church. Open dialogue and communication are important.

8) If the answer to #6 is yes, was it fixable from your viewpoint?

See answer to #7.

9) What do you think of the diaconate: is it necessary, has it fulfilled its mandated role, where else do you see a need for the diaconate in addition to how it is being utilized at the present?

The deacon indeed all Christians receive the mandate of the Gospel at Baptism. In terms of charism, whatever can be understood as charity provides rich soil to be tilled, planted and harvested for the Kingdom.

10) What would you have done differently than what you did/have done?

I would mandate Obedience and Humility, Create in us o Lord, a clean heart."<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Questions by myself and answers by Deacon Ray Duplechain, Permanent Diaconate Director for the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Answers provided by email on 5 July 2016

## **Appendix B**

### **Formation Syllabus for the 2010 Formation Group**

2007 – Two semesters - Social Justice (fifteen social justice encyclicals)

Two semesters - Systematic Theology

Two semesters – Spirituality

2008 – Two Semesters – Introduction to Sacred Scripture (Old Testament)

Two semesters – Canon Law

Two semesters – Spirituality

One semester – Sacred Liturgy

2009 – One semester – Catechetics

One semester – RCIA

One semester – Church History

Two semesters – Spirituality

Two semesters – Clinical Pastoral Training

One semester – Mariology

One semester – Homiletics

2010 – Two semesters – Homiletics

One semester – Practicum: baptism

One semester – Theology

Two semesters – Spirituality

Numerous 1 day or half day seminars on Funerals, Wakes, Safe Environment

Post Ordination – One semester - Homiletics

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