



Deacons in ACTION



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Giving Thanks

As we come to the end of another year, we do so with a great sense of thanksgiving for a year of continuing to grow as a diaconate community, and in appreciation for Father Bedford and his leadership and guidance over the last number of years. He has certainly made a mark on who we are as a diaconate community and in who we will become over the coming years. I thank him for his friendship, guidance and support to me and my brother deacons and our wives. We wish him continued good health and blessings as he takes time for himself, family and friends. God Bless, Father B.

Deacon Berkley Guthro

Banner Photo: Fr Bedford Doucette with the deacons at his retirement dinner Nov. 3, 2024 in Port Hawkesbury

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The Diaconate brings the kingdom of God just a little closer at hand ... Mk.1:15

Fr. Bedford Doucette reflects on his service as Director of the Permanent Diaconate in our diocese



Deacon Berkley once shared with his fellow deacons that on his ordination day “the doors of the cathedral opened, the entrance hymn was “Here I am Lord”. I walked through and said “Here I am Lord.”

I can say something similar when Bishop Brian Dunn asked me to take on the ministry of Director of Deacons after Fr. Jim Attwood died. It was a daunting task, beginning a new ministry in the diocese that needed the strong support of pastors and laity alike. One fear I had was that some people would see this as an abandonment of the lay faith development programs in favor of a new level of clergy.

We went to work immediately:

- Advisory Formation Team
 - Setting up the four year program trying to build each year upon the previous one.
 - seeking qualified teachers/facilitators
- We should note the number of M.As and Ph.Ds on the list!
- procuring facilities for balanced weekend experiences: Villa Madonna, Bethany, Mabou Renewal Center, Monastery and Pictou CND Renewal Center
 - eliciting the cooperation of priests, some of whom were so supportive that they donated funds just to form community among the deacons /spouses like pizza, lunch together, etc.
 - weekend schedule to be a balanced environment for prayer, study and enjoyment.

We had three ordination classes:

2011-2012-2019 with appointments to both parishes and service ministries. Through ongoing Formation we matured so well that we were able to host the first Atlantic Deacon Conference in Port Hawkesbury. Deacons/spouses from Atlantic Canada participated in what was deemed to be very successful. We hope for more.

We were able to have a deacon a year participate with myself in the National Association of Deacon Directors Conference in various parts of the US. We hoped this would broaden deacons’ perspectives.

I was pleased to see the inauguration of a Deacons Seasonal Newsletter: “Deacons in Action.”

Deacons were challenged to take on more diocesan responsibilities like Diocesan MC and Assistant MC, Bishop’s Legate, Diocesan Finance Council, Diocesan Liturgical Commission, National Bishops’ Committee with Indigenous and other significant roles.

We are so pleased to have been able to sponsor deacons to achieve their CPE for ministry in hospitals, homes, prisons, visiting bereaved families, street ministry with the homeless. Then there were Loaves and Fishes in Sydney Area and Hospitality Corner in Antigonish.

“I am filled with joy” when I realize the amount of good work being done by our deacons and spouses.

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Fr. Bedford reflects ...

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The notion of an Atlantic Dioceses Diaconate Formation Program arose during the First Atlantic Conference. After two years of preparation, now four dioceses are involved: Halifax -Yarmouth, Antigonish, Saint John and Grand Falls.

After its first year, it sparks hope for the Organizing Team!

So much has happened. So much growth. As we hear: “when good people get together, good things happen.” That’s the story of the Diaconate in our Diocese and Atlantic Region. Good things happen when deacon/spouses gather for their Ongoing Formation sessions whether it be: Day with the Bishop, retreat, clergy days, bringing diaconal insights at deanery meetings, socializing, workshops and Zoom courses, etc.



Fr. Bedford with the Deacons’ spouses at his retirement gathering on Nov. 3. Wives of deacons are an active part of the Permanent Diaconate and diaconate services in their parishes.

For all of this I am so grateful that I played a part, but only a part. As “it takes a village to raise a child,” it also takes a diocese to raise a deacon. I thank God I have been part of that wonderful project. I have learned much as the Lord can teach us through any process that aims at bringing the Kingdom just a little bit closer.



Bishop Wayne Kirkpatrick and Fr Bedford at Fr B’s retirement gathering on Nov. 3.

And now, I move on, a little reluctantly and with hope at this new challenging and consoling stage of my life as a priest of the Diocese. My hopes are:

- 1) to write stories about the priests who have died in my first 25 years as a priest (1968-1993)
- 2) to offer spiritual direction :

If interested contact me at 902-578-4375 or bedford@dioceseofantigonish.ca

- 3) to offer any assistance to the Planning and Formation Teams for Diaconate

I assure you always of my prayerful support and thanksgiving for your friendship and source of hope to me and the diocese. The vision lives on. God bless you.

Fraternally

Fr. Bedford Doucette, Director “Emeritus”

Day of Reflection



Deacons and wives gathered in September with Bishop Wayne Kirkpatrick for their annual Day of Reflection

Deacon Michael retires ...

A recent celebration honoured Deacon Michael and Susan Doyle for their years of service in the parish of St. Ann, Guysborough.



Deacon Michael and Susan Doyle at their retirement celebration (above) and with Bishop Wayne Kirkpatrick and Fr. Bedford Doucette.



Summer Gathering ...

A good time was had by all. Thanks to Deacon David and Doreen Lewis for hosting.



Thoughts for the Day

“Nip things in the bud.”
(Fr. Bedford Doucette)

“Even the smallest act of caring for another person is like a drop of water – it will make ripples throughout the entire pond.”
(Jessy and Bryan Matteo)