

Admission into Candidacy for Deacon Aspirants September 7, 2019

Today, the Church of the Archdiocese stands in support of these men, who have prayerfully completed the path of aspirancy in their ongoing formation, and today are called to the Admission of Candidacy. We stand in a spirit of gratitude for their spouses, children and extended families, who have journeyed with them in thought and prayer.

In this celebration, this rite, “the one who aspires to ordination publicly manifests his will to offer himself to God and the Church, to exercise a sacred order. It is his first official recognition of the positive signs of the vocation to the diaconate.” This call continues to be built upon the four dimension of a candidate for the permanent diaconate; namely, human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. Each of these is important, yet the spiritual dimension is to be the ‘foundation’ of your lives, just as Christ is the rock upon which the Church is built. In short, Jesus must become the ‘spiritual corner stone’ of your ministerial lives. To be changed. To be transformed.

In our reading from St. Paul to the Colossians, we learn that all of us have been ‘estranged’ from God and have done ‘evil deeds’, but through the mercy and love of Jesus Christ, we have been cleansed of sin, so that we might become “holy and blameless and irreproachable before him”, so you might “continue in the faith, stable and steadfast.” You cannot waver in your faith, nor compromise the authenticity of the Gospel message. As Paul became a minister, so too, must each of you. As you have heard repeatedly stated, you must become ‘missionary disciples of the Lord’.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus is tested once again by the scrupulous Pharisees, who quote the law without understanding its meaning. He quoted Samuel where he said, “Have you not read what David did?” They

missed the whole meaning of the text. You, in your call to Candidacy, must have an open mind to the Sacred Scriptures. When you read Scriptures, do not say, “Listen, Lord, for your servant is speaking,” but, “Speak, Lord, for your servant is LISTENING.” Read and reread the Sacred Scriptures with an ‘open heart’, and the Lord will open up the meaning of his message.

When you read the Sacred Scriptures, which should become part of your daily spiritual reading, bring a ‘needy, hungry heart’. You need to be awakened to the Word, and let it truly become ‘flesh’ within your mind and heart. If you do not bring that need you will miss the deepest meaning of Scriptures.

As you come to this crossroad in your formation, let the Lord continue to ‘mold’ you with his loving hands and fill you with the power of the Holy Spirit. People may question their faith and the reason for continuing to believe, especially in the shadow of the events that have hurt the Catholic Church of the past, but again, you “believe because the ‘Spirit of the Lord, is upon (you)’”, and how that presence of the Holy Spirit will allow you to show them the pathway back to the Church.

As Pope Francis stated: One who serves is not a slave to his own agenda, but ever ready to deal with the unexpected, ever available to his brothers and sisters and ever open to God’s constant surprises. One who serves is open to surprises, to God’s constant surprises. A servant knows how to open the doors of his time and inner space for those around him, including those who knock on those doors at odd hours, even if that entails setting aside something he likes to do or giving up some well-deserved rest. (5/29/16 Deacons)

May Mary, the Virgin Mother of our Lord, the Mother of the Church, and 'your' Mother intercede for each of you as you make this commitment of your faith to model your lives after he Son.