and universities, homeless shelters such as the Ozanam Inn, the Stella Maris Maritime Center, for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, local sheriff's offices and police departments, various hospice programs and nursing homes, the Catholic Committee on Scouting, and local food banks. Deacons serve as Archdiocesan Masters of Ceremonies and help to staff several Archdiocesan offices including the Family Life Apostolate, the Metropolitan Tribunal and the Office of the Permanent Diaconate. Permanent Deacons also hold the position of the Director of Saint Vincent de Paul Society, Director of Ozanam Inn, Director of the Abbey Christian Life Center, Director of Stewardship, Executive Director of Pastoral Services, and Vice Chancellor.

Since those early and humble beginnings the Permanent Diaconate has flourished and forges forward into the future with increasing scope while producing much fruit for the people of God.

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Over Thirty Years Of Service To The Archdiocese of New Orleans
"As I Have Done For You, You Should Also Do"

John 13:15

When John XXIII announced his intentions to an assembly of Cardinals he was astounded by the silence his proposal received to call a Church Council. The silence of his own reflection and prayer, coupled with his experience and understanding of the Church in a modern world produced the bud from which great fruit for the Church would spring.

On September 29, 1964 the Bishops of the Second Vatican Council gave their approval to the restoration of the Diaconate as a permanent order in ordained ministry of the Church. This action as well as others during the Council, prompted by the gift of the Holy Spirit inspired the Church to return to an apostolic ecclesiology that honors the gift of all vocations in the Church.

As an order, the Diaconate flourished during the second and third centuries. Diaconal function varied in the ecclesial communities in different places but always flowed from the ministries of the word, liturgy and charity. Historically and theologically Deacons have a filial relationship with the Bishop. Through this relationship they have been charged with tasks ranging from various forms of administration to ministering to the poor.

In the third and fourth centuries the role of Deacon began to experience a crisis. The reasons for this crisis are many and complex. By the emergence of the fifth century the deacon in the western church begins to appear as a primarily liturgical ministry. By the middle ages the Diaconate became little more than a step along the way toward ordination to the priesthood. With these changes the Apostolic understanding of “Orders”- Bishop, Priest, and Deacon as distinct and separate from each other fell into obscurity. So it remained until the sixteenth century.

The Council of Trent (1545-63) reaffirmed the place of the Diaconate in the Church, though it’s call for a restoration of the Diaconate was never implemented. The Second Vatican Council sought to restore the Diaconate as a permanent and distinct ministry in the Church. Thus calling for a reintroduction of the ministry in those churches where it had fallen into disuse.

Pope Paul VI, acting on the call of the Council issued the apostolic letter “Sacrum Diaconatus Ordinem” on June 18, 1967. This letter followed by other documents established the norms and rationale for the restoration of the Permanent Diaconate. In 1972, having studied Permanent Diaconate Formation Programs in other parts of the United States, Archbishop Philip M. Hannan decided to implement a program of formation in the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

In May of 1974, the first “pioneer” group of Permanent Deacons were ordained thus launching the Archdiocese headlong into the development of an outstanding program for the formation, life, and ministry of Permanent Deacons.

Archbishop Francis B. Schulte and Archbishop Alfred C. Hughes, followed by Archbishop Gregory M. Aymond continued to strengthen and to expand the role of the Permanent Deacon in the Archdiocese. It is under the leadership of these four Archbishops that the Formation Program of the Archdiocese has come to be recognized as one of the finest in the United States and as a leader in the Southeastern Region.

Following the ordination of the first group of men many others have been ordained in service for the Church. Future ministry needs are continuously being addressed with selection of new formation groups of Aspirants and Candidates. Deacons serve in many parishes throughout the Archdiocese. Additionally, in keeping with the vocation received Deacons serve in a wide variety of Diocesan ministries. They serve in prison systems that includes jails and corrections facilities. Service in these prison systems affords the Community of Deacons the opportunity to serve male and female as well as adult and juvenile inmates. They care for the spiritual needs of the sick in hospitals. Archdiocesan ministries where deacons serve include: high schools