

**The Diaconate.** On Friday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, Bishop Paprocki ordained **Paul Lesupati**, a member of the parish, to the order of the diaconate. He will serve as a deacon until it is determined he is ready to be a priest. This is normally about one year. In the sacrament of Holy Orders there are three levels; diaconate, presbyterate, and episcopate. Every priest is taken from the order of the diaconate which may cause some to conclude it is a transitional level. However, the diaconate is not originally a “stepping stone” to the priesthood. It has its own unique history. The word diaconate comes from the Greek word “diakonos” which literally means servant. Deacons are first mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles where the community appointed seven men to assist the apostles with the charitable work of the church. Perhaps the most famous of these deacons was St. Stephen, the first martyr. In the first six centuries of the church, deacons were common. They oversaw the care of the poor, assisted at Mass by administering communion, took communion to those who were absent from the assembly, led the prayers of the people, and baptized new converts. They also participated in councils that governed the church. Where the Bible does not use the term deaconess, a woman named Phoebe is mentioned in Romans 16:1-2 as a deacon in the church at Cenechrae. Female deacons are also mentioned in a letter written to the emperor Trajan by Pliny the Younger in the year 112. What the role or frequency of women deacons was not spelled out. In the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the role of deacon began to decline and more or less became absorbed into the presbyterate. It thus became a necessary step for those called to be priests. However, during the second Vatican Council, the order was revived. This is what we call the permanent diaconate. It is open to men who wish to be deacons but not priests. In our parish, we have two, Deacon David Erdmann and Deacon Tom Burns. The transitional diaconate still remains and even when one is ordained a priest, they do not “lose” their previous order. That means that priests and bishops are also deacons, and even though they serve the church in a different way, they are still called to a ministry of service. We congratulate Deacon Paul Lesupati on his ordination and look forward to his priestly ordination in about a year. Please keep him in your prayers.

Congratulations also to **Father Seth Brown** who will begin his new assignment at Mother of Dolours Parish in Vandalia and St. Joseph’s Parish in Ramsey on July 1<sup>st</sup>. It seems like Fr. Brown just came to Blessed Sacrament. Well, actually he did just come in March. However it was clear it would be just temporary until new assignments were made. I ask you also keep him in your prayers as he prepares for his new assignment.

**Father Jeff**  
**04/18/2021**