



# El Diácono



July 2025

A Newsletter for the Deacons of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe

Issue 50E

Our Diaconal Community is  
*GROWING!!!*



Permanent Diaconate Ordination  
June 14, 2025  
Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi





# 2025 Deacon Community Retreat

## “Esperanza”

**Sheraton Airport in Albuquerque**

**September 26-28**



**Register online at:**

**<https://form.jotform.com/kdavis5430/2025-diaconate-retreat>**

**\$625 per couple** if you register before August 1

*See the registration form for all rates.*

**This retreat will be led by deacons and their wives from the  
Archdiocese of Santa Fe.**

**Please help us find sponsors for the retreat. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information.**



## **2025 Deacon Retreat**

### **“Esperanza”**

### **Schedule**

#### Friday, September 26

<b>3:00 - 5:00 pm</b>	<b>Registration:</b> Sheraton Airport Hotel, Albuquerque
<b>6:00—7:00 pm</b>	<b>Dinner</b>
<b>7:15 pm</b>	<b>Welcome</b>
<b>7:30 - 8:30 pm</b>	<b>Evening Prayer with Mass:</b> Memorial of Deceased Deacons and Wives, with Archbishop John C. Wester

#### Saturday, September 27

<b>7:45 am</b>	<b>Morning Prayer</b>
<b>8:15 am</b>	<b>Breakfast</b>
<b>9:15 am</b>	<b>First Presentation</b>
<b>10:15 am</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>10:45 am</b>	<b>Second Presentation</b>
<b>11:45 am</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>12:00 pm</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>1:00 - 3:00 pm</b>	<b>Rest in the Lord/Prayer/Adoration/Rosary (on your own)</b> <b>Optional Communal Penance Service and Confessions</b>
<b>3:00 pm</b>	<b>Third Presentation</b>
<b>4:00 pm</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>4:30 pm</b>	<b>Evening Prayer</b>
<b>5:30 pm</b>	<b>Mass</b>
<b>6:30 pm</b>	<b>Dinner and Business Meeting</b>
<b>8:00 pm</b>	<b>Ice cream social</b>

#### Sunday, September 28

<b>8:15 am</b>	<b>Breakfast</b>
<b>9:15 am</b>	<b>Morning Prayer</b>
<b>10:00 am</b>	<b>Concluding Presentation</b>
<b>11:00 am</b>	<b>Sending Forth Ceremony</b>




*Schedule is subject to change*



## Retreat Presenters Needed!!!

Do you have something to share with your fellow deacons on what it means to be a Deacon of Hope? Remind us of the meaning of hope, inspire us toward hope, enliven our hope, or help us wield our hope in our communities! The Retreat Team is looking for folks to offer an hour presentation at the Annual Deacon Community Retreat (September 26-28). We have four sessions that need to be filled with your wisdom!



Here are the criteria:

- ⇒ The presentation must fit the overall retreat theme (Esperanza or Hope)
- ⇒ Hour long
- ⇒ Include some discussion
- ⇒ May include video
- ⇒ Be appropriate for all in attendance
- ⇒ Be approved by the Retreat Committee

To apply for approval, please submit your request by [CLICKING HERE.](#)

**The deadline has been extended to July 7.**



2025 has definitely been a year of growth for our deacon community. As we welcome 14 new deacons (page 6) and their families, we also welcome deacons moving in to our community and say farewell to some who have left to serve in other dioceses.

Another sign of growth is taking place in our formation programs. 19 men applied for deacon formation (page 7) on top of the 16 who have requested admission to Candidacy. Please keep them in your prayers!

I have been privileged to be a part of the Rebuild My Church Campaign (page 8) which is a sign of growth for the Archdiocese. Reading through the plans put forth by the deaneries, I have been struck with the level of cooperation and collaboration expressed in all nine (8 Deaneries plus the Pastoral Center). The emphasis on evangelization is also an interesting component that bodes well for the future of our Archdiocese.

Thanks to those of you who participated in our in-service with Sr. Ginger Downey this past spring at Our Lady of Fatima Parish. I know that it has had a very positive impact on the way deacons are leading liturgy.

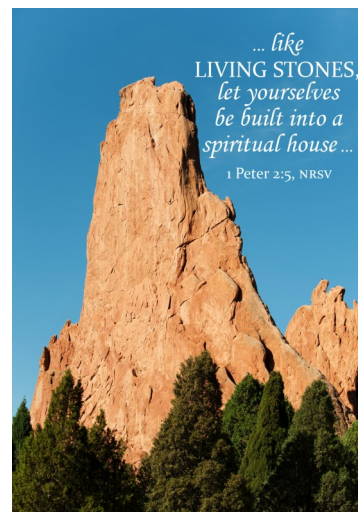
This year's retreat (pages 2-4) will be quite interesting as it will be facilitated by members of our own community. The deadline for applying as a facilitator for a one-hour session has been extended and all are invited to apply.

Congratulations to Deacon Paul Benoit (page 15) who is being inducted into the New Mexico Activities Association Hall of Fame at a ceremony on July 19 in Albuquerque. We are very proud of you, Paul.

Finally, please know that I am here to help you navigate the joys and trials of serving as a deacon. If you are having difficulty either personally or professionally, please let us know. Archbishop Wester has a deep love and respect for you as a deacon and has asked me to help you be the best deacon you can be.

I look forward to seeing you in September!

*Deacon Keith*





## Fourteen New Deacons!

Fourteen men were ordained into the order of deacons by Archbishop John C. Wester on Saturday, June 14th at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Congratulations to the newest members of our deacon community:

Deacon Emilio (Gene) Brizal - Our Lady of Sorrows, Las Vegas	Janelle
Deacon Tyler Cole – Nativity of the BVM, Albuquerque	Melissa
Deacon Steven Garcia - Queen of Heaven, Albuquerque	Angel
Deacon Jerry Griego - San Miguel, Socorro	Patricia
Deacon Bryan Huffaker - Prince of Peace, Albuquerque	Jennifer
Deacon Ricardo Maestas - Our Lady of Sorrows, Las Vegas	Vallerie
Deacon Anthony Martinez - Our Lady of Guadalupe, Taos	Jennifer
Deacon Francisco (Kiko) Martinez - St. Jude Thaddeus, Albuquerque	Rachel
Deacon Jeff McCarthy - Cristo Rey, Santa Fe	Rita
Deacon Rudy Rael - San Felipe de Neri, Albuquerque	Pearl
Deacon Francisco Rodriguez - Sacred Heart, Clovis	Lora
Deacon Juan (Buck) Sanchez - Nativity of the BVM, Albuquerque	Martha
Deacon Guadalupe (Lupe) Sosa - Sacred Heart, Clovis	Carmen
Deacon Arthur Trujillo - Our Lady of Guadalupe, Peralta	Claudia



Want to see more  
photos?

[CLICK HERE!](#)





# Formation

Soon to be Candidates and Aspirants will be meeting with their pastor, mentor, wife and Deacon Keith to talk about next steps.

19 men applied for admission to deacon formation in anticipation of ordination in 2030.

If you know of a man who you think would make a good deacon, feel free to discuss this with him and have him contact the Deacon Office. Better yet, he can fill out an information form at this link: <https://form.jotform.com/kdavis5430/inquirercontact>

**Candidacy Installation  
Mass**

**Wednesday  
September 17  
6pm**

**Location TBA**

## Upcoming Formation Schedule

July	Meetings with pastors and mentors (2028 & 2030 Cohorts)
August 8-10	Candidacy Retreat (2028 Cohort): Fr. Chris Hallada Pecos Retreat Center
August 15-16	Introduction to Aspirancy (2030 Cohort): Dcn Keith Davis, Ed.D. Sandia Room, Catholic Pastoral Center
September 12-13	Orientation to Candidacy (2028 Cohort): Dcn. Keith Davis, Ed.D. St. John XXIII
September 19-20	Survey of Catholic Spirituality (2030 Cohort): Fr. Chris Hallada Deacon Office Conference Room
October 17-18	Introduction to Philosophy (2028 Cohort): Fr. Peter Mueller, O.Praem. St. John XXIII
October 24-25	Introduction to the Liturgy of the Hours (2030 Cohort): Dcn. Keith Davis, Ed.D. Sandia Room, Catholic Pastoral Center



## Rebuild My Church Update

The Archdiocesan Rebuild My Church Campaign is entering its final stage before promulgation on Wednesday, October 1, at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi. Led by Archbishop Wester and Michelle Montez, the planning process involved the creation of a strategic plan for each of the eight deaneries as well as the Pastoral Center. The nine plans are now complete and have been turned over to the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council which will develop a comprehensive plan for the entire Archdiocese.

The Deanery Plans will be promulgated by the Archbishop at liturgies in each of the deaneries prior to the final liturgy at the Cathedral. Those are currently being scheduled, so check with your Dean to find out when and where they will be held.

Thanks to all of you who participated in this endeavor!

The purpose of this campaign is to initiate a new way of “being Church” for the Archdiocese. Not only does it recognize the value of collaboration within the deanery, but it demonstrates the value of listening.

May the Holy Spirit continue to guide us and lead our Archdiocese in its efforts to build the Kingdom.



The Deacon Office is looking for help in ensuring that the materials from the office are translated into Spanish effectively. If you are bilingual and have an hour or two per month to review newsletters and other published materials produced by the Deacon Office, please contact Dcn. Keith at the Deacon Office.



# ST. NORBERT

## C O L L E G E

### Master of Theological Studies

St. Norbert College, in cooperation with the Ecumenical Institute for Ministry, offers a professional degree for pastoral ministry for students in New Mexico and neighboring states. The MTS degree grounds students in the Christian tradition as a base from which to address the changing realities of parishes and congregations. Classes are offered (online) Friday evenings and Saturdays for maximum flexibility.

#### FINANCIAL AID IS AVAILABLE

You may be eligible for greatly reduced or free tuition!

Here are a few members of the deacon community who have taken advantage of this wonderful opportunity:

- ♦ Dcn. Michael Wesley
- ♦ Dcn. Joe Silva
- ♦ Toni Silva
- ♦ Dcn. Andy Carrillo
- ♦ Dcn. Arthur Trujillo
- ♦ Dcn. Rudy Rael
- ♦ Antonio Gonzales (Dcn. Candidate)
- ♦ Deana Hernandez (wife of Dcn. Lou)
- ♦ Dcn. Alex Valdez
- ♦ Pat McIntire (Instructor)
- ♦ Joseph Sandoval (Instructor)
- ♦ Mary Reinhardt (Instructor)
- ♦ Bernadette Bach (Formation Board)
- ♦ Dcn. Harold Pullings
- ♦ Dcn. Frank Lucero
- ♦ Linda Granato (wife of Dcn. Jack)

The St. Norbert program is now using a cohort model and a new cohort is starting in August.

**For more information,**

**[CLICK HERE.](#)**



## Hispanic Deacons Wife Study

If you are an Hispanic Deacon and married, please consider passing this on to your spouse.

Dear Participant:

My name is Oscar Castellanos, a doctoral student at Marian University in Indianapolis, IN. I am conducting research as part of my capstone project in the topic of lived experiences of wives of Hispanic deacons and understand the support systems in the U.S. Catholic church.

You are invited to engage in a two-session interview, 60 minutes each, either via zoom, about how you experienced the formation process before and after the ordination of your husband. You and other women in similar positions have been invited; this would be considered a group interview.

The group interview will be recorded and transcribed for accuracy. You are not being compensated for this participation, which is voluntary. The interview results and feedback will be used in a qualitative capstone study, defended to a committee in an open public forum to satisfy a doctorate degree requirement, and the final paper may be published. **Your name and feedback will remain confidential.** You will not be identified individually. Any comments you state will be attributed to a pseudonym.

[CLICK HERE](#) to take the survey (English and Spanish)

Your participation is appreciated. You may withdraw your consent at any time and decline to answer any question posed in the interview that may make you uncomfortable.

Sincerely,

Oscar J. Castellanos

Ed.D. in Organizational Leadership Student

Marian University

3200 Cold Spring Road

Indianapolis, IN 46222

[ocastellanos@marian.edu](mailto:ocastellanos@marian.edu) 503-840-9535 Cell



## St. Stephen Fund



This fund is established according to the Archdioceses of Santa Fe by-laws and constitution. It is an approved fund for the designated purpose of giving financial assistance to Permanent Deacons and/or their wives. The St Stephen Fund is intended to be temporary assistance during a time of crisis or when grave financial need has been identified. Assistance from the fund is intended to be a one-time gift, but under certain circumstances the St Stephen Fund Committee may decide to help on more than one occasion. The Permanent Deacon or widow requesting assistance must complete a Request for Assistance form and send to the St Stephen Fund Committee for review and then forward to the Office of the Director of Deacons for action.

### Direct Contributions

You can now make direct contributions to the St Stephen's Fund through the link below.

<https://secure.acceptiva.com/?cst=Twwtgk>

A PROGRAM AND SERVICE OF  
THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC RISK RETENTION GROUP, INC.



# VIRTUS<sup>®</sup>Online

Just a reminder that all deacons must remain in compliance with the Archdiocesan Call to Protect protocols, including keeping current (every five years) with your VIRTUS training. If you are not certain if you are in compliance, you can look it up at the link below, or contact Yolanda at the Deacon Office.

[English Virtus Link](#)

[Spanish Virtus Link](#)

The Office of Deacons would like to thank you for your ministry to the Church, The Archdiocese of Santa Fe, and to the many services provided to the people of God and the entire community. May God Bless you abundantly!



## Diaconate Information

### Cohort 2028

Current Class size: 14 Candidates  
Ordination: 2028



### Cohort 2030

Current Class size: 15 Aspirants  
Ordination in 2030



**Deacon Retreat**  
**September 26-28**  
**Sheraton Airport, Albuquerque**

## Deacon Council Update

Dcn. John Cordova (SMDLP, Santa Fe) was elected interim Chair of the Deacon Council. Dcn. Michael Illerbrun (Nativity, ABQ) is the co-chair. We are still working at filling the position of Secretary and the at-large positions. Hopefully, these will all be filled by September.



### Roster of Representatives to the Deacon Council

Chair	Deacon John Cordova (SMDLP, Santa Fe)
Co-chair	Deacon Michale Illerbrun (Nativity, Albuquerque)
Santa Fe Deanery	Deacon Michael Salazar (San Isidro, Santa Fe)
Albuquerque A Deanery	Deacon Ed Leyba (St. Thomas Aquinas, Rio Rancho)
Albuquerque B Deanery	Deacon Lou Hernandez (St. Charles Borromeo, ABQ)
Albuquerque C Deanery	Deacon Leon Jones (Ascension, ABQ)
Northwest Deanery	Deacon Alex Valdez (Sacred Heart, Espanola)
Northeast Deanery	Deacon Chris Torres (Immaculate Conception, Las Vegas)
Southwest Deanery	Deacon Chris Martinez (Immaculate Conception, Tome)
Southeast Deanery	Deacon Paul Benoit (St. Helen, Portales)



# Rest in Peace

## Pray for the Dead

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,  
and let perpetual light shine upon them.

May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God,  
rest in peace. ~Amen~



Deacon Ruben Barela, April 16, 2025

Deacon Ramond Alcouffe, April 10, 2025



### July

7—Deacon Hemming A. Atterbom (2005)

8—Deacon Harry Beare (2022)

18—Deacon Ron Schultz (2010)

24—Deacon J. Robert Martinez (2008)

28—Deacon Joe Trujillo (2010)

31—Deacon Charles Cullen (2017)

31—Deacon Phillip Salazar III (2019)

### August

19—Deacon Rudy Zamora (2018)

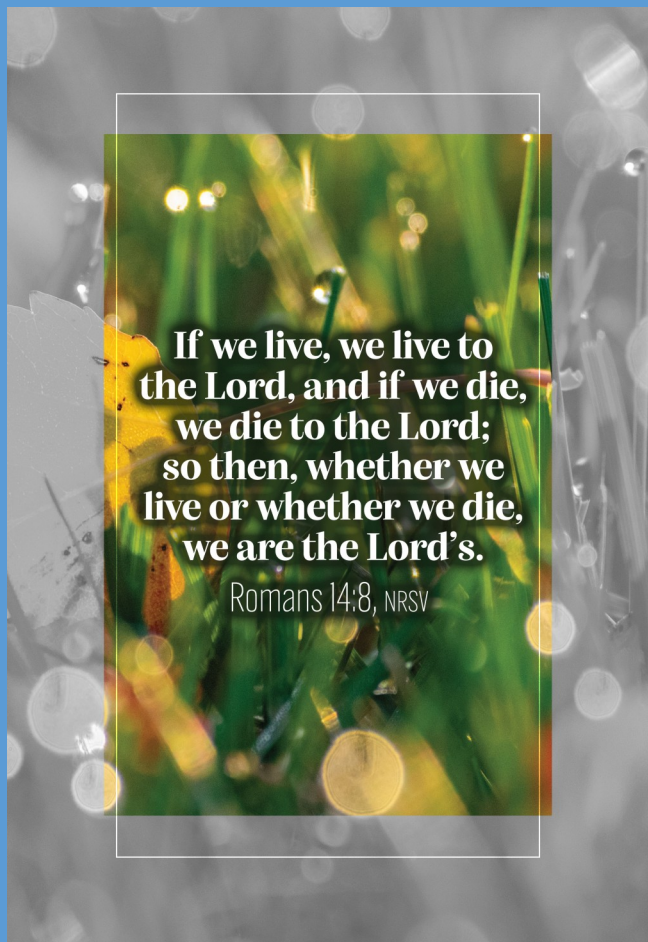
26—Deacon Carlos Pacheco (2016)

### September

6—Deacon Richard D. Prentiss (2000)

20—Deacon Raynaldo Cordova (2017)

23—Deacon Kenneth Trujillo (2022)





The Deacon Personnel Board assists deacons looking for a change in their assignment as well as helping parishes that need a deacon. If you are looking to change assignments, please contact the Deacon Office to be placed on the agenda. Your request must be in writing (an email will suffice).

If your parish is in need of another deacon, your pastor must request this in writing. The Personnel Board also can help with retirements and leaves of absence.

Here are the current changes of assignment that have been made official by Archbishop Wester\*:

Effective Friday, March 14, 2025 -

- ◊ Deacon Michael Wesley has been granted retirement after serving over 21 years.

Effective Monday, March 31, 2025 -

- ◊ Deacon William Barry has been granted retirement after serving over 21 years.
- ◊ Deacon Gilbert Valdez has been granted retirement after serving over 21 years.

Effective Saturday, June 14, 2025, the following have been assigned to the respective parish -

- ◊ Deacon Emilio (Gene) Brizal - Our Lady of Sorrows, Las Vegas
- ◊ Deacon Tyler Cole – Nativity of the BVM, Albuquerque
- ◊ Deacon Steven Garcia - Queen of Heaven, Albuquerque
- ◊ Deacon Jerry Griego - San Miguel, Socorro
- ◊ Deacon Bryan Huffaker - Prince of Peace, Albuquerque
- ◊ Deacon Ricardo Maestas - Our Lady of Sorrows, Las Vegas
- ◊ Deacon Anthony Martinez - Our Lady of Guadalupe, Taos
- ◊ Deacon Francisco (Kiko) Martinez - St. Jude Thaddeus, Albuquerque
- ◊ Deacon Jeff McCarthy - Cristo Rey, Santa Fe
- ◊ Deacon Rudy Rael - San Felipe, Albuquerque
- ◊ Deacon Francisco Rodriguez - Sacred Heart, Clovis
- ◊ Deacon Juan (Buck) Sanchez - Nativity of the BVM, Albuquerque
- ◊ Deacon Guadalupe (Lupe) Sosa - Sacred Heart, Clovis
- ◊ Deacon Arthur Trujillo - Our Lady of Guadalupe, Peralta

Effective Friday, August 1, 2025—

- ◊ Deacon Keith Davis, continuing his assignments as Director of the Office of Deacons, Deacon Formation and service at Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in Albuquerque, will also serve as Chancellor for the Archdiocese of Santa Fe.

Please keep all the clergy who are beginning new assignments in your prayers.

\* Note that other assignments are pending approval from the archbishop and will be announced in future issues.



## Deacon Paul Benoit Admitted to NMAA Hall of Fame



Paul Benoit is the 117th inductee into the New Mexico Activities Association Hall of Fame, with a career in education, coaching and administration that spans nearly 30 years. Benoit received his Bachelor's Degree from the College of Santa Fe in 1986 and his Master's Degree from Eastern New Mexico University in 1991. During his coaching, teaching and administrative career, Benoit worked at Tucumcari Schools, Estancia Schools, Animas Schools and Floyd Schools. Benoit was named NM Superintendent of the Year for the 2013-2014 school year and was inducted into the EPAC Hall of Honor in 2017, for his support of academic and athletic programs in the region and state. Benoit also was inducted into the NMCEL Administrator

Hall of Fame (2016-17) and has served on the NMAA Board of Directors and continues to serve on the Appeals Committee. Since retirement, Benoit continues to serve on and chairs the NMAA Appeals Committee. He also served on several educational organization committees, including NM Middle School Association, NM Coalition of Educational Leaders, NM Superintendents Association, and the NM Retired Superintendent Association and is a member of NMREA (Retired Educators). Benoit has been married to his college sweetheart, Lucia, since 1986. They have three children, Matthew, Alexis, and Hannah, all of whom are Floyd graduates. They also have a "bonus daughter", Jesica, a young lady they took in and fostered through graduation. In all, Paul and Lucia have 18 grandchildren.

Deacon Paul was ordained in 2023 and serves at St. Helen's parish in Portales. He is a member of the Deacon Personnel Board and the Deacon Retreat Planning Team.

**The New Mexico Activities Association, in conjunction with the NMAA Hall of Fame Committee, announces the Class of 2025 for induction into the NMAA Hall of Fame. The NMAA Hall of Fame induction ceremony will take place at a banquet during the New Mexico High School Sports Summer Conference, to be held the evening of July 19th at the Albuquerque Convention Center.**



## Solemnities, Feasts and Memorials July through September

### July

- 1 St. Junipero Serra, Priest
- 3 Feast of St. Thomas, Apostle
- 4 Independence Day
- 5 St. Anthony Zaccaria, Priest  
And St. Elizabeth of Portugal
- 9 St. Augustine Zhao Rong, Priest  
And companions, Martyrs
- 11 St. Benedict, Abbot
- 14 St. Karteri Tekakwitha, Virgin
- 15 St. Bonaventure, Bishop/Doctor
- 16 Our Lady of Mt. Carmel
- 18 St. Camillus de Lillis, Priest
- 21 St. Lawrence of Brindisi, Priest/Doctor
- 22 St. Mary Magdalene
- 23 St. Bridget
- 24 St. Sharbel Makhluf, Priest
- 25 St. James, Apostle
- 26 Sts. Joachim and Anne
- 29 Sts. Martha, Mary and Lazarus
- 30 St. Peter Chrysologus, Bishop/Doctor
- 31 St. Ignatius of Loyola

### August

- 1 St. Alphonsus Liguori, Bishop/Doctor
- 2 St. Eusebius of Vercelli, Bishop  
St. Peter Julian Eymard, Priest
- 4 St. John Vianney, Priest
- 5 Dedication of St. Mary Major
- 6 Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord
- 7 St. Sixtus II, Pope & Companions, Martyrs  
St. Cajetan, Priest
- 7 St. Dominic, Priest
- 8 St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Martyr
- 11 St. Clare, Virgin
- 12 St. Jane Frances de Chantal
- 13 Sts. Pontian, Pope & Hippolytus, Martyrs

### August, Continued

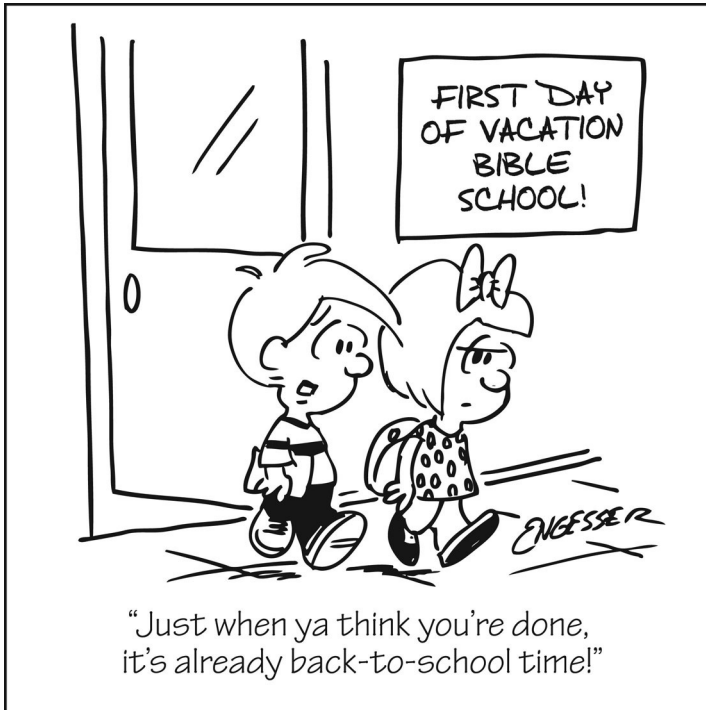
- 11 St. Maximilian Kolbe, Priest/Martyr
- 12 Solemnity of the Assumption
- 13 St. Stephen of Hungary
- 19 St. John Eudes, Priest
- 20 St. Bernard, Abbot/Doctor
- 21 St. Pius X, Pope
- 22 Queenship of the BVM
- 23 St. Rose of Lima
- 25 St. Louis, St. Joseph Calasanz
- 27 St. Monica
- 28 St. Augustine
- 29 Passion of St. John the Baptist

### September

- 3 St. Gregory the Great, Pope/Doctor
- 8 Nativity of the BVM
- 9 St. Peter Claver
- 12 Most Holy Name of Mary
- 13 St. John Chrysostom, Bishop/Doctor
- 14 Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross
- 15 Our Lady of Sorrows
- 16 Sts. Cornelius and Cyprian, Bishop/Martyrs
- 17 St. Robert Bellarmine, Bishop/Doctor  
St. Hildegard of Bingen, Doctor
- 19 St. Januarius, Bishop/Martyr
- 20 St. Andrew Kim Tae-Gon, Priest and Paul  
Chong Ha-Sang and Companions, Martyrs
- 23 St. Pius of Pietrelcina, Priest
- 26 Sts. Cosmas and Damian, Martyrs
- 27 St. Vincent de Paul, Priest
- 29 Sts. Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Archangels
- 30 St. Jerome, Priest/Doctor



## Just for Fun!



**Deacons: Update your contact information.** If your personal contact information has changed, please inform the Diaconate Office. This helps facilitate communication between you, the Diaconate Community and the Archdiocese. Phone 505-831-8246 or email the Diaconate Secretary at [ylovato@asfnm.org](mailto:ylovato@asfnm.org)

### NOTE

Keep in mind if there is any information you would like to include in the *El Diácono* Newsletter that would be of interest to the Deacon Community, i.e., special events, accomplishments, ministry work, etc., please inform the Diaconate Office and we will be happy to announce it. With the publication of this newsletter, we will be especially looking for events in the June through September 2025 time frame with a submission deadline of September 10th, 2025 to the Director of the Office of Deacons.

**Advertising Spaces available:  
Contact the Diaconate Office if  
you would like to Advertise  
your business here.**



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