

# The Herald

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 2

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A quarterly publication for the Deacons of the Diocese of Wilmington

## WHERE IS THE HOLY SPIRIT LEADING YOU?



*(Editor's Note: Due to a publishing faux pas, this article was not included in the last issue. While meant for Lent, it can still help us on our spiritual journeys.)*

One of the all-time great classics that is played during the Christmas season is Doctor Seuss' *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* This 1966 production features a grumpy, antisocial green creature who lives alone in a cave above a mountain that overlooks a town called Whoville. The Grinch hates Christmas and is annoyed by the town's Christmas celebrations.

One Christmas Eve, he decides to stop Christmas Day from coming. He disguises himself as Santa Claus and his dog as a reindeer. He enters the town and steals all the presents and decorations and everything associated with Christmas. He plans on dumping the stolen goods, but then he discovers that the citizens of Whoville, despite having no decorations or gifts, gather in the middle of the town and sing as Christmas Day arrives. Realizing that Christmas Day means more than just material things, the Grinch has a change of heart and returns everything.

Why bring up a Christmas classic when we just entered into Lent? Lent is a period during which people fast and refrain from consuming rich foods and meat. Some of us give up eating chocolate or drinking soft drinks. Some actually refrain from television and put down their cell phones. Imagine that for a

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POPE LEO

moment if you will. What would life be like if everything we had was taken away? Could we be joyous people?

Our churches have become barren with many of our decorations taken away. Even our joyous celebration of singing Alleluia and Gloria are gone. Our churches have become barren. In many instances our churches have become desolate, almost desert like. Unlike our Christmas story of the Grinch, this stripping away of decorations and joyous singing is done intentionally. It is to remind us that Jesus enters the desert, and he is led by the Holy Spirit. For forty days and forty nights, Jesus goes without food, everything is taken away.

Wait! Was not Jesus just Baptized in the Jordan by John and the Father speaks and says, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased?" Should not this be an occasion for celebration? Instead, Jesus is led into the desert, and we all know that he was tempted by the devil. The three temptations with which Jesus is confronted deal with human weaknesses. One of those weaknesses is food. Yes, we all need food to survive, but is food controlling our lives? Do we eat to live, or do we live to eat? Sometimes we need to take stock of our out-of-control eating; that is eating just for the sake of enjoyment.

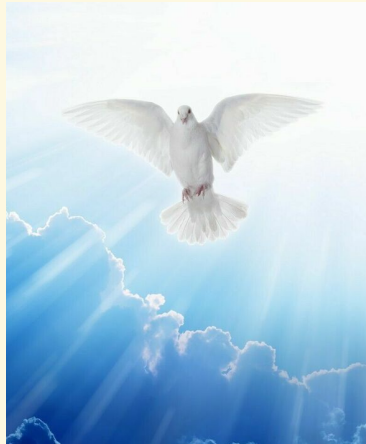
Another temptation was for Jesus to test God's protection by jumping off the temple rooftop. How

many times have we tested God with "If you really love me..."? We may scoff at that, but in reality we do tend to say things like, "If only I could win the lottery," or "Why can't the Lord just cut me a break?" It is difficult not to test God when we are desperate and cannot see His plan for us. Sometimes, the plan may not be to our liking, but God never fails us.

The last temptation deals with the human desire for power and prestige. We all sit back and think like Tevye from the play, *Fiddler on the Roof*. "If I were a rich man..." sings Tevye as he makes his rounds delivering milk. Singing about all the things he could do if he were rich. Apparently, Tevye never heard Jesus' rebuke about how hard it is for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Why is that? Do we put more faith in our riches than in God?

As we enter into the Lenten season, we must ask ourselves if we are willing to be led into the desert by the Holy Spirit. When we are convicted by the Holy Spirit, and our sins are brought to light, remember, the Father who said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," is the same loving Father who sent that Son to the cross for our sins. When we enter the desert of Lent, be led by the Holy Spirit, and let our weaknesses come out as St. Paul quotes Jesus who said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Jesus gave us the Holy Spirit so that we may become perfect.

Deacon Vince Pisano



## DID YOU KNOW?

### FRIDAYS ARE STILL DAYS OF PENANCE

With the exception of solemnities, "All Fridays through the year and the time of Lent are penitential days and times throughout the entire Church." (CIC 1250) Furthermore, "Abstinence from eating meat or another food according to the prescriptions of the conference of bishops is to be observed on Fridays throughout the year unless they are solemnities." (CIC 1251) In the United States, the bishops have declared that it is permissible to substitute some other form of penance, but we are still urged to fast from "something" in remembrance of the Lord's death on the cross. It is preferable to abstain from animal flesh, and, if desired, the faithful may also refrain from some other lawful pleasure as an additional penance for their good or on behalf of others.

# GIRM GEMS

Carrying the *Book of the Gospels* slightly elevated, the Deacon precedes the Priest as he approaches the altar or else walks at the Priest's side.. When he reaches the altar, if he is carrying the Book of the Gospels, he omits the sign of reverence and goes up to the altar. It is a praiseworthy practice for him to place the Book of the Gospels on the altar, after which, together with the Priest, he venerates the altar with a kiss.

If, however, he is not carrying the Book of the Gospels, he makes a profound bow to the altar\* with the Priest in the customary way and with him venerates the altar with a kiss.

Lastly, if incense is being used, he assists the Priest in putting some into the thurible and in incensing the cross and the altar. Once the altar has been incensed, the Deacon goes to the chair together with the Priest and there stands at the Priest's side and assists him as necessary. (173-174)

\*If, however, the tabernacle with the Most Blessed Sacrament is situated in the sanctuary, the Priest, the Deacon, and the other ministers genuflect when they approach the altar and when they depart from it, but not during the celebration of Mass itself. (274)

## THE SPIRIT IS WILLING

The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. We all have read this and probably repeated it multiple times. We want to do things, but our bodies frailties get in the way, and there are many reasons why:

health issues, lack of sleep, poor diet, or exhaustion from other activities. We strengthen other aspects of our spiritual life by daily prayer, Mass, Rosary, or Eucharist Devotion. We read theological books, spiritual books, and articles, and listen to podcasts. Some have spiritual directors.



Diaconate training has given us the groundwork to explore various aspects of theology. All of which is to build the heart and mind, yet I have never seen physical activity included with any of this. Have you ever recited the Hail Mary while doing push-ups? Maybe not, but it is worth considering. I will not tell you what exercises to do or what equipment to get, but I will say that exercise helps not only the body but mental state as well.

Working out has shown to reduce depression. On the police force, when an officer is involved in a shooting, one of the things they tell them to do is to go workout within a day or two of the incident

because it can relieve stress, anxiety, and depression. Working out can provide mental clarity, and these benefits can certainly impact our religious life.

1 Timothy 4:8 says: "For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for

all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come." Exercise does have value, so why not combine it with spiritual activities? If exercise elevates our mood, then it will be easier to do what Philippians 4:4 states: "Always be joyful in the Lord! I will say it again: Be joyful!" So when the spirit is willing, the body will be ready.

Deacon Walt Ferris

# GOOD READS

## THE MYSTERY OF JOY

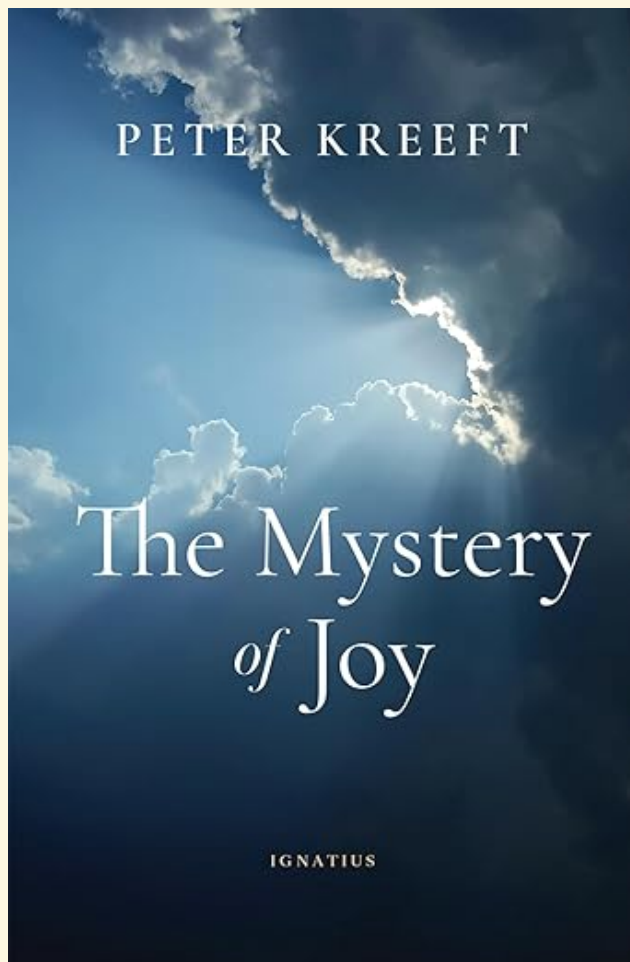
BY PETER KREEFT

Joy: we look for it, long for it, and spend our lives chasing it. Yet do we really know what it is? Is it a feeling, a state of mind, or a reward for success? Do we know where to find it? The more we seek it the more it eludes us.

Yet joy is real. “Joy”, writes philosopher Peter Kreeft, “is a mystery. It is bigger than we are.” Joy’s secret, however, is that it cannot be beached or found but only given. True joy is God Himself, who, giving Himself, takes us outside ourselves, across valleys of loss and mountains of triumph.

This lucid, witty reflection on the true nature of joy convinces us, page after page, that while sorrow is inevitable, joy is very, very near at hand. “It’s scandalously simple,” Kreeft reveals. “There’s no method; you just do it.” To “do” joy, we must let go of all fake happiness, all false gods. We must return, over and over, to the one true Joy, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Drawing from the wisdom of C. S. Lewis and Saint Thomas Aquinas, this instant classic by self-proclaimed curmudgeon Peter Kreeft walks us through the long, beautiful task of surrendering to deep joy, which is the chief work of any life worth living.



**COMING SOON TO EACH  
DEACON'S USPS MAILBOX**

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR  
AUGUST 10 AT 2 P.M.**





## EXCITING ONGOING FORMATION NEWS

The Josephinum Diaconate Institute (JDI) provides the academic instruction for our Deacon Formation Program. They have recently launched an online ongoing formation system called Josephinum Connect!. We will be testing this system for three months, and 24 deacons have been selected to participate in the test. The diocese is paying for the three-month test subscription. The normal cost of a yearly subscription is \$144.

The requirements for participation were simple. Watch at least one online video per month (*most videos take no more than 60 minutes to watch, but some courses include more than one video, and you may watch as many as you like*). At the end of each video, the deacons complete an evaluation form for JDI's internal usage. In addition, they will complete an evaluation form for CDOW's usage during this test period. At the end of the three months, JDI will hold a focus group session with these deacons to obtain more specific feedback.

This new ongoing formation system has great potential for us. JDI continues to produce new material and add it to the system for our use.

Be on the lookout for a follow-up article when the test has been completed.

PLEASE CONTINUE TO PRAY  
FOR THESE MEN IN THE  
DEACON FORMATION PROGRAM

# FORMING Servant Hearts



FOR THE *DIOCESE* OF WILMINGTON

## DEACON CANDIDATE COHORT 2029



Our Mother  
of Sorrows

St. Francis  
de Sales

St. Mary of the  
Assumption



Bishop of Wilmington



Church of the  
Holy Cross

Saint  
Christopher

St. John the  
Beloved

Church of the  
Holy Cross



Deacon  
Philip  
Belt

Reverend  
Joseph  
Piekarski

Deacon  
Frank  
Hesson

Office of the Permanent Diaconate

Director

Director  
Spiritual  
Formation

Assistant  
Director



St. Michael  
the Archangel

St. Francis  
de Sales

St. Ann  
Bethany Beach

Church of the  
Holy Cross

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# ON THE CALENDAR

**JULY 9, 2025, WEDNESDAY**

**DEACON COMMUNITY BOARD**

**VIA ZOOM—6:30 TO 8 P.M.**

**JULY 19, 2025, SATURDAY**

**ONGOING FORMATION—PREPARING FOR  
FUNERAL SERVICES AND COMMITTALS**

**CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS, DOVER—8 A.M. TO 12:30 P.M.**

**AUGUST 10, 2025, SUNDAY**

**DEACONS' JUBILEE ANNIVERSARIES  
CELEBRATION**

**Mass and Renewal of Diaconal Promises Celebrated by Bishop Koenig**

**CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS, DOVER—2 P.M.**

**SEPTEMBER 23, 2025, TUESDAY (or thereabouts)**

**DEACON FORUM**

**Your Deacon Forum Coordinator is to email you with the exact date and time for your group.**

**OCTOBER 28-30, 2025, TUESDAY—THURSDAY**

**HOMILETICS REFRESHER COURSE**

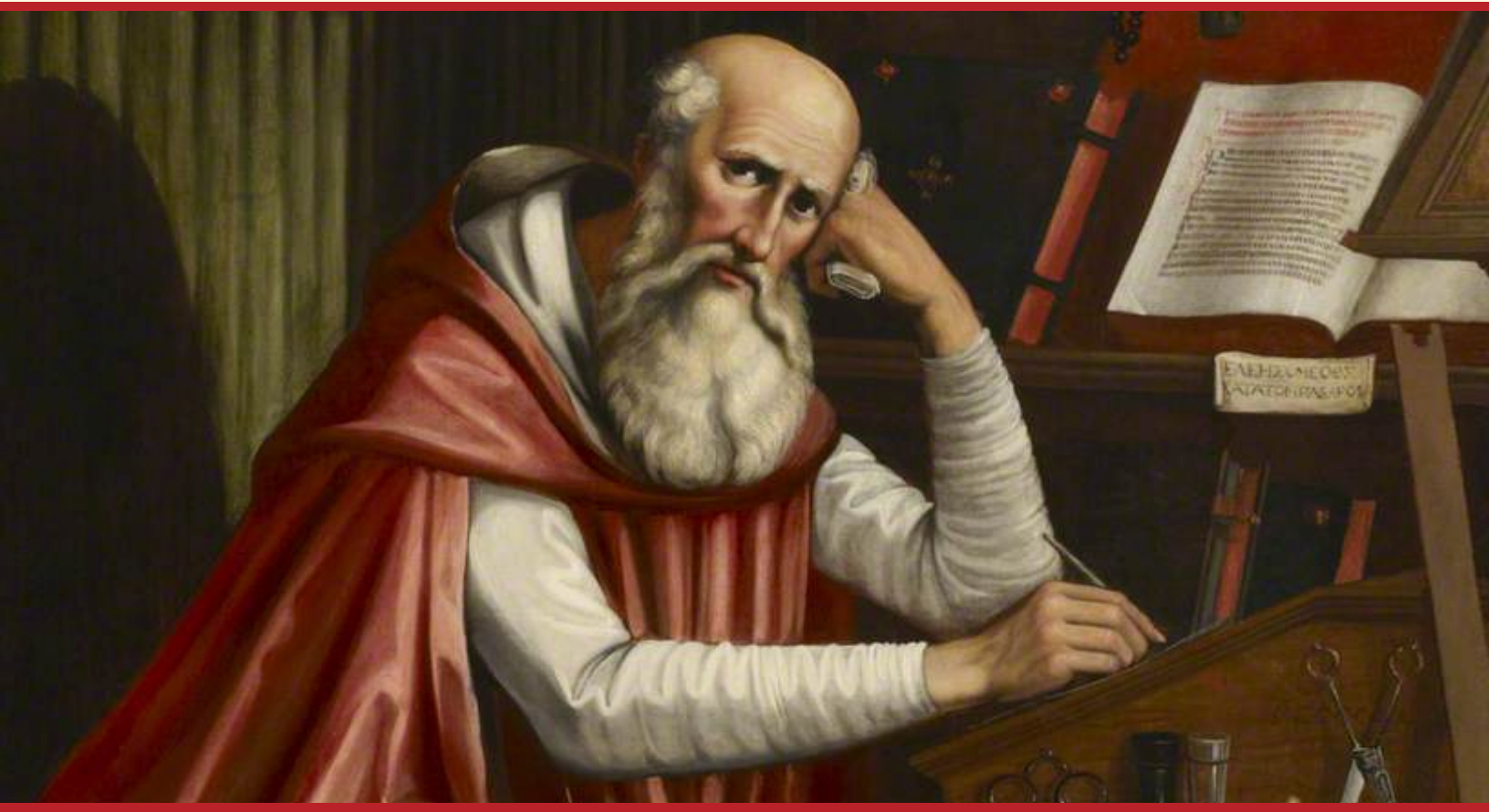
**DAYLESFORD ABBEY, PAOLI, PA—5 P.M. TO 2:30 P.M.**

## **RESERVE THE DATE**

**FEBRUARY 27-28 THROUGH MARCH 1, 2026, FRIDAY—SUNDAY**

**MANDATORY RETREAT FOR DEACONS**

**HOLY SAVIOR CHURCH, OCEAN CITY, MARYLAND**



# HOMILETICS REFRESHER COURSE

In Bishop Koenig's pastoral letter of Lent 2024 to the permanent deacons of the Diocese of Wilmington, he wrote, "I am also asking every permanent deacon to participate at least once every three years in a weekend homiletics class." At that time, planning was just beginning for these classes.

The first of these classes has now been scheduled, and a group of 24 deacons has been selected to participate. The class is being held on Tuesday, October 28, beginning with dinner and continuing through Thursday, October 30, until mid-afternoon at the Daylesford Abbey in Paoli, Pennsylvania. Fr. Rich Jasper will be the lead instructor making presentations for constructing and presenting good homilies. In addition, Frs. Brian Lewis, Norm Carroll, and Michael Preston will assist Fr. Jasper in offering assistance and criticism to the deacons in their respective coaching groups.

Preaching at Sunday and other liturgies by deacons is important for our parishioners, and this course should be beneficial for you and raise your homilies to a new level of quality.

Thank you for the good work our deacons do for their parishes and Our Lord, Jesus Christ.



# DEACON COMMUNITY BOARD NOMINATING COMMITTEE 4-1-1

“As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace” 1 Peter 4:10. Everyone reading *The Herald* have been adorned with gifts and blessed with the privilege to serve. All members of the Deacon Community Board (DCB) were nominated by a member of the Deacon Community to serve you and enrich your ministry by their activities on the Communication, Ongoing Formation, Retreat/Liturgy/Spirituality, Handbook/Policy, and, last but hardly least, Nominating committees.



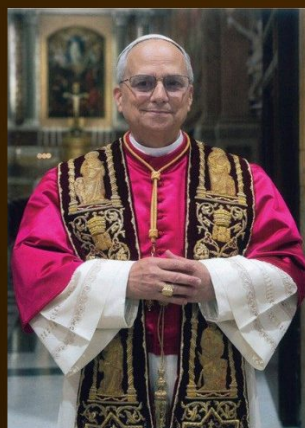
We are blessed to have a full working DCB with Deacons representing all seven Deaneries of our Diocese, four Deacons-at-Large, and two Wives. Over the summer and early fall, The Nominating committee will be recruiting for those positions with terms ending in January 2026, which include representation from the Brandywine Hundred and Silver Lake Deaneries, two Deacons-at-Large, and one Wife. Our mission is to fill all positions in order to continue the good stewardship of God’s grace that St. Peter shares.

It is our desire that all Deacons and Wives prayerfully discern a role on the DCB and join us in service to one another. Do not be surprised to receive a call, text, or email from Deacon Steve Oldiges or myself, Pam Boyd, that you have been nominated to serve your community. I can promise you will thoroughly enjoy the fellowship.

LET US CONTINUE TO PRAY  
FOR OUR HOLY FATHER!  
MAY HE GUIDE OUR CHURCH  
TOWARD PEACE AND JUSTICE!

“May the Virgin Mary, whose entire life was a response to the Lord’s call, always accompany us in following Jesus.”

- Pope Leo XIV, *Angelus*, 11 May 2025





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