

**Homily for the Ordination of Andrew Krug to the Diaconate  
Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception**

**October 28, 2022**

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My brother priests, permanent deacons, consecrated religious, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, it is good that we are here for this joyful celebration for the ordination to the diaconate of Andrew Krug here in the Mother Church of our Diocese.

Just over two weeks ago, on October 11<sup>th</sup>, the Church marked the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, an event whose impact has been extremely significant to our lived experience as Catholics in the modern world. In a recent reflection on his experience of the Council, Pope Emeritus Benedict shared that initially “there were many doubts as to whether it would be possible at all, to organize the insights and questions into a conciliar statement and thus to give the Church a direction for its further journey.”<sup>1</sup> But as the Council proceeded, the Holy Father wrote that “a new council proved to be not only meaningful, but necessary.” He also notes that the “positive power of the Council is also slowly emerging.”

Among the many fruits of the Council is what we are celebrating today, the ordination of Andy Krug to the diaconate. While ordinations to the diaconate have been a part of the Church for centuries, the Council proposed a change to the diaconate which many consider new, but which in reality is something very ancient. In the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, the Council Fathers noted how in many areas in the Church, the fulfillment of the necessary ministerial duties of charity and administration were lacking. As a result of that lacking, the document stated simply that “the diaconate can in the future be restored as a proper and permanent rank of the hierarchy.”<sup>2</sup>

In 1967, Pope St. Paul VI officially opened the door for this restored rank of the permanent diaconate, inviting bishops of episcopal conferences to discern whether or not to seek to introduce a program of formation for this restored rank. In 1968, the bishops of the United States expressed their desire to welcome the ministry of the permanent diaconate into our country. In the more than 50 years since permission was given, many dioceses in our country have formed and ordained men to serve in this ministry of service alongside the episcopal and presbyteral ranks.

Here in our diocese, we ordained our first class of deacons in 2007 and have had several more deacons ordained over the past 15 years. While not all of our deacons are able to be here, I want to express my profound gratitude to all of you for the ministry you all have provided to this local Church in various way, enabling us to be a more vibrant diocese because of your ministry. I know that you, along with our entire diocese, are grateful to welcome another member among you as I ordain Andy to the diaconate this evening.

Andy, as you prepare to receive the grace of the sacrament of Holy Orders, I would like to invite you to be aware of the great gift you will be receiving. In our American mindset, it can be tempting to focus on what you will be able to *do* after having received the sacrament of Holy Orders. In fact, as we listened to the readings for this Mass, we heard of various forms of service that are at the heart of diaconal ministry: preaching and explaining the Word of God, as in the case of Philip with the Ethiopian eunuch in the Acts of the Apostles; administering Baptism, also demonstrated by Phillip; attending to and assisting at the various liturgical rites of the Church, prefigured by the ministry of the Levites of whom we heard in the Book of Numbers; and the charitable work

expected of the faithful and prudent steward described by Jesus in the Gospel. These and the other duties asked of you are indeed important, for you will be asked to exercise this ministry with faithfulness and generosity. However, it is of the utmost importance first to consider who you will *become* as you receive this sacrament.

The Catechism's definition of a sacrament in general begins to give us the answer to this question. "The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us."<sup>3</sup> Most importantly, the sacraments give us a share in the divine life of God through the gift of grace. As such, one of the most important responsibilities that you will have as a deacon will be to continually foster that gift of divine life that will be increased in your soul. The greatest guarantee of being fruitful in your ministry is always remain always as united as possible with the Lord who dwells in you. In the General Norms for Restoring the Permanent Diaconate issued by Pope St. Paul VI in 1967, he listed the following means as ways of guarding this gift of divine life. He wrote that deacons should:

- 1) devote themselves assiduously to reading and meditating on the word of God;

- 2) frequently, and if possible, every day, participate actively in the sacrifice of the Mass, receive the sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist and devoutly visit the Sacrament;
- 3) purify their souls frequently with the sacrament of Penance and, for the purpose of receiving it worthily, examine their conscience each day;
- 4) venerate and love the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God with fervent devotion.

No doubt you will encourage the faithful to undertake these same practices of devotion, but your words will be all the more efficacious when you yourself attend to these, seeing them not as optional, but rather as indispensable to your life and ministry as a deacon.

In addition to these spiritual practices that will keep you rooted in your relationship with the Lord, it will be important for you to strive to be a man of virtue – specifically the virtues of humility, obedience and charity, virtues which give a visible witness to Christ to whom you will be more closely united through this sacrament. These virtues are not only needed when exercising ministry, though. In your life, a relatively small number of hours will be dedicated to direct diaconal ministry. It is

important to see every moment of your life as an opportunity to practice these virtues. To the extent that these virtues become ingrained and habitual in the many other experiences of life, you will be well prepared to exercise them in the context of ministry.

In this regard, I invite you to see your relationship with your family as the privileged place to live these virtues. The permanent diaconate permits the ordination of married men, which calls for special attention to how these two vocations can be integrated in a way that neither suffers as a result of the other. Since the Sacrament of Matrimony is your first vocation, it should serve as a source of nourishment to your vocation as a deacon. On this point, the Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons issued by the Congregation of the Clergy states beautifully:

In marriage, love becomes an interpersonal giving of self, a mutual fidelity, a source of new life, a support in times of joy and sorrow: in short, love becomes service. When lived in faith, this family service is for the rest of the faithful an example of the love of Christ. The married deacon must use it as a stimulus of his *diaconia* in the Church.<sup>4</sup>

None of what I am recommending above should be new, but as you prepare to receive this new gift of grace from the Church, it is important to see these practices as critical to living your ministry well. I therefore invite you to keep in mind that as you are making your promises to undertake this new role as a deacon in the Church, you will at the same time be reaffirming your baptismal promises and your marriage vows, all of which are integral to who you are, and foundational to who you are becoming as a man more completely configured to Christ the Servant.

May God give us this grace. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, *Letter to Father Dave Pivonka, TOR, President of Franciscan University of Steubenville*, October 7, 2022. <https://franciscan.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Benedict-XVI-Letter-to-Fr-Dave-Pivonka-TOR.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, 29.

<sup>3</sup> CCC 1131

<sup>4</sup> Congregation for the Clergy, *Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons*, 61.